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***Contributions  
to the Ancient History  
of the U.S.S.R. \****

**English Translation by V. M. Maurin, Cambridge, Mass., 1961**

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The chapter is accompanied by three maps of Transcaucasia:

[6th-1st centuries B.C.](#)

[2nd-1st centuries B.C.](#)

[1st-2nd centuries A.D.](#)

**Chapter 5.**

**Transcaucasia and Roman Expansion**

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**A. Transcaucasia during the last centuries B.C.**

Life among the Transcaucasian tribes and nationalities during the last centuries B. C. was marked by the development and consolidation of the slaveholding social structure and by the expansion of trade connections. As a result, the Armenian and Georgian nationalities came into existence, while the unification of eastern Transcaucasian tribes, headed by the Albanians, signified the beginning of the formation of an Albanian nation in Azerbaijan. The process of the consolidation of Armenian and Georgian tribes was marked by a

fierce struggle for freedom and for independence from foreign conquerors: at the beginning against the Assyrians and Urartians and later against the Achaemenids and Seleucids. This struggle helped unite their forces and strengthen their ties with one another, and promoted ethnic consolidation and the formation of these nationalities.

During the first century B. C., the history of the nationalities and states of Transcaucasia was marked by the beginning of a long and fierce struggle against a new enemy, more powerful than any of its predecessors. This enemy was the Roman Empire. In ancient literary sources, information concerning Transcaucasian nations during the last centuries B. C. is scanty. These data are supplemented to a degree by archaeological evidence, which relates principally to the economic and cultural aspects of the life of the inhabitants.

At this time the inhabitants of Transcaucasia practised agriculture in some places, while in others—mainly in mountain regions—a pastoral mode of life prevailed. In provinces that were more advanced economically towns existed in which the inhabitants lived by trade and handicrafts. A distinct division of society into classes and guilds becomes apparent—a feature characteristic of a slaveholding social structure and a corresponding governmental organization. Simultaneously, a primitive tribal structure still persisted in remote mountain areas.

Long before the campaign of Alexander the Great in the East, the majority of the provinces of the Armenian highlands and adjacent areas that were under the rule of the Achaemenids were, in effect, only nominally dependent, and were likely to secede at any time. Under the Achaemenids, the chiefs of individual Armenian tribes did not lose their positions of leadership among their people; on the contrary, their local importance was greatly enhanced. Alexander's conquests created a new threat to the independence of Transcaucasia, and to Armenia primarily. Probably for this reason the Armenians supported Darius in his struggle against Alexander. After the battle of Gaugamela in 331 B. C., the Armenians submitted formally to Alexander's rule, but resisted stubbornly any attempt to penetrate their country and to interfere with their mode of life. And so Armenia became virtually free of foreign rule, and toward the end of the fourth century there appear new independent and semi-independent states which had already begun forming under the Achaemenids on the basis of political federations.

Thus, the region of the mountainous spurs of the Skidis Range on the upper courses of the Dycus and Halys rivers, crossed by deep gorges, was under the rule of local Armenian chieftains. This was the area of the ancient region of Hayasa, inhabited by descendants of wealthy cattle-raising tribes and known, in sources of the Hellenistic period, as Little Armenia [Lesser Armenia/Armenia Minor]. This region had excellent grazing lands, and was renowned since ancient times for its horse-breeding and its highly

developed metallurgy. After Alexander's death, a national revolt broke out against the Macedonian governor, [73] Neoptolemus. Eumenes, governor of Cappadocia, undertook to subdue the insurrection, but his forces were too small and he was compelled to side with the local ruler, Artabases, who was confirmed as sovereign of the country under the condition that he acknowledge Macedonian rule.

The acquisition of the Ayrarat plain by the Armenians, by means of colonization and assimilation of the Alarodi [Urartian] tribes who lived there, began as early as the end of the fifth century, though in the third century the Armenization of this area was not yet complete. However, after the downfall of the Achaemenids in the fourth century, there emerged an independent kingdom of Ayrarat with Armavir as its center. This kingdom was ruled by the Orontid [Ervanduni] dynasty, the descendants of the governors of the thirteenth satrapy. At first, Orontes acknowledged Alexander's sovereignty, but during the strife of the Diadochi in 316 B.C., the Ayrarat kingdom became independent of Macedonian rule. Some time later it was drawn under the political influence of Media Atropatene, and became, evidently, dependent on the rulers of that country.

The provinces of southern Armenia on the other hand, *i.e.*, "Eastern Armenia" [according to Xenophon, the basin of Lake Van, designated as "Armenia"] and "Western Armenia" [in Greek texts called Sophene, and Tsopk in Armenian] were annexed by the Seleucid Empire. The administration was left in the care of local rulers, who appeared as "kings" to their subjects, but who, according to Seleucid administrative terminology, were called "strategoi" ("chieftains") or provincial governors.

The history of Armenia Minor during the rule of the Seleucids is almost unknown. Armenian rulers continued to govern the country independently of the Seleucids. During the first half of the second century, Armenia Minor came completely under the political influence of the Pontic kingdom and in 115 B.C. it became a part of the empire ruled by Mithridates VI Eupator (circa 131-63). In the year 72 B.C. the country became a part of the Roman Empire, and was for a long time isolated from the social and cultural life of the Armenian people.

The second Armenian province, Sophene, was situated along the lower course of the Aratsani, a left tributary of the Euphrates. It was noted for its horticulture and for its highly developed agriculture. It is not without cause that Polybius called its central part a "magnificent plain." Earlier than other Armenian provinces, Sophene was drawn into international trade. Through it passed a branch of the great caravan route, the former "Imperial Highway," leading from Asia Minor to Media, Parthia and Bactria, and to the south was the principal trade route, connecting the capital of the Seleucid Empire, Antioch [Antakya] on the Orontes, with Seleucia on the Tigris. All important trade routes of Armenia passed through Sophene, in the neighborhood of which were located large

commercial and cultural centers.

In Sophene itself there were many towns of mixed population. The rulers of the province were the first among all the Armenian rulers to coin money, and a lively trade flourished in the urban centers.

Under the Seleucids, Sophene constituted a separate military-administrative province. It was governed by local rulers ("kings") who were duty-bound to supply taxes and an army when called upon by the Seleucid king. At times, taking advantage of favorable conditions, the rulers of Sophene disregarded their obligations as subjects. In the middle of the third century B. C., Sophene was governed by King Arsames [Armenian Arsham]. He founded the city of Arsamosata [Armenian Arshamoshat] on the left bank of the Aratsani, a tributary of the Euphrates, and coined money. About 240 B. C., he made an attempt to declare his independence, but was forced to submit.

According to numismatic evidence, Arsames was followed by Abdisarus, who was succeeded by Xerxes at the end of the third century. Polybius relates that Xerxes [74] refused to pay the usual tax to the Seleucid treasury, and Antiochus III (d. 187 B. C.) was compelled to undertake a campaign and lay siege to the city of Arsamosata. As a result of negotiations, the conflict was settled and Antiochus even entered into an alliance with Xerxes and waived the arrears of the taxes. This case proves how ephemeral was the subjugation of Sophene to the central Seleucid government.

The territory of so-called Greater Armenia, the principal region of the development of the Armenian nation, originally comprised a small area on the Upper Euphrates. However, in 220 B.C., Antiochus III, after suppressing the rebellious satrap, Milon of Media, turned against his ally Artabazanes, the ruler of Media Atropatene, compelled him to renounce his claim to the Ayrarat Province and joined this province with Armenia, which has since been called Greater Armenia. As administrator ("strategos") of Greater Armenia, Antiochus supported the local ruler Artaxius [Armenian Artashes].

In this manner, at the end of the third century B. C., all Armenian provinces, with the exception of Armenia Minor, were united under the domination of the Seleucids. The Greek-Macedonian nobility attempted to establish its overlordship in the former Persian domains, and traders, including those engaged in the slave trade, artisans and colonists, followed the Macedonian army into Armenia; these settled in towns and appropriated parcels of municipal land and monopolized international trade. The further development of private landownership was thereby facilitated, as well as the increase in slaveholding and the development of trade relations. At the same time, during the period of Macedonian rule, a significant Greek culture made important inroads into Armenia. In larger cities, centers of international trade, the use of the Greek language continued to

increase. The rulers of Sophene coined money with Greek inscriptions. In the absence of a written language, the Armenians began to use Greek in foreign affairs, for official and commercial communication, and became acquainted with the Greek calendar in its Syrian-Macedonian version.

Thus, during the third century B. C., Armenia was drawn into the sphere of the economic, political and cultural life of the Hellenistic world, and its subsequent development tended to strengthen and broaden its ties with the Hellenistic states of the eastern Mediterranean. However, the rule of the Seleucids in Armenia did not last long. The gradual emergence of local states in Asia Minor, such as Pontus, the Greek-Bactrian Empire, Parthia, Greater Armenia and Sophene, and the rising power of Rome, finally accomplished the dissolution of the vast Seleucid Empire.

As a result of the great economic and social progress of Armenia, only an insignificant impulse was necessary to cast off foreign rule. Immediately after the defeat of Antiochus III by the Romans in the battle of Magnesia (190 B. C.), the Armenian "strategoi" Artaxius [Artashes] of Greater Armenia, and Zariadris [Zareh, Xerxes' successor] of Sophene, declared themselves kings, and thus established two independent Armenian states.

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We possess some detailed information on the mode of life and history of the Iberians during the last centuries B. C. An ancient popular tradition, preserved in the Georgian Annals, credits the emergence of the Iberian State to a legendary campaign of Alexander the Great into the Kura Valley; in reality, this never took place. Supposedly, Alexander established as a ruler a certain Azo who, according to one version, was a Macedonian and a relative of the conqueror and, according to another version, was the son of the King Aran-Kartli. These Annals also mention other interesting and more authentic events concerning the ancient Iberian State. In the *Kartlis-Tskhovreba* a struggle is reported between the leaders of various tribes for the possession of the region on the middle course of the Kura, of the Aragva [75] Valley, and of the great and wealthy ancient city of Mtskheta. According to the version found in the *Conversion of Kartli*, Prince Azo moved from his homeland Aran- Kartli to Mtskheta, taking along a number of his relatives, and introduced into Mtskheta the cult of the gods of his country. This version of the tradition evidently preserved the memory of an actual incursion of agricultural tribes from adjacent localities into the area at the mouth of the Aragva River.

However, at the beginning of the third century B. C., a representative of the local Iberian nobility, Pharnabazus, concluded an alliance with Kudzh, the ruler of Egrisa [Colchis], and with the help of the Syrian King, Antiochus I, defeated Azo, and proclaimed himself king. Pharnabazus founded, on the right bank of the Kura opposite Mtskheta, a fortified city which he called Armazis-Tsikhe, which means "fortress of Armazi" ["Harmozika" in

Strabo's translation]. This name of the city was derived from that of Moon God, Armazi. The Annals ascribe to Pharnabazus the establishment of the kingdom as well as the building of fortresses, the administrative organization of districts headed by governors, and the founding of a standing army. However, one must assume that the state organization under Pharnabazus was more primitive than the one described in the Annals, and that the organs of state government in Iberia developed gradually. Nevertheless, in the third century B.C., Iberia was a major power. In addition to the Aragva basin with the boundary along the Alazani River in the east, and the Darial Gorge [the so-called "Inner Kartli"] in the north, it included Sispiritida [ancient province of Sper], together with the slopes of the Paryadres, Chorzene and Gogarene. These areas constituted the so-called Lower Kartli. At this time, Iberia's political power spread also over the southeastern part of western Georgia, whose ruler Kudzh acknowledged, according to the *Kartlis-Tskhovreba*, the sovereignty of Pharnabazus.

However, in the second century, the Iberian State experienced a period of temporary decline, while its neighbor, the young Armenian State, went through a period of intensive development. This weakening of Iberia resulted in considerable territorial loss. Districts of Lower Kartli—the slopes of the Paryadres, Chorzene and Gogarene—became detached from Iberia and incorporated into Armenia. During this period, Iberia entered into an alliance with Armenia, apparently on a somewhat unequal basis.

The most detailed information concerning Iberia and its inhabitants is given by Strabo, who indicated four approaches to this country: (a) from the direction of Colchis through the Colchidian fortress of Sarapanae [modern Shorapani]; (b) from the country of the northern nomadic tribes through the Aragva [Darial] Gorge; (c) from Albania through the mountain pass and the marshy lowlands of Alazani; and (d) from Armenia through the Cyrus [Kura] River gorge at the point where Tbilisi [formerly Tiflis] is now located.

According to Strabo, Iberia was a wealthy, densely populated country, divided into two zones: a mountainous area and river valleys. The inhabitants of the former mainly practised stock-raising and lived, in the words of Strabo, "according to the customs of the Scythians and Sarmatians, to whom they were related and whose neighbors they were." The Scythians and Sarmatians mentioned here are the North Caucasian tribes, which constituted the basic mass of the population of Inner Kartli until its occupation by the Iberians. According to Strabo, the mountaineer stock-raisers constituted the majority of the population of Iberia. Among them the customs of primitive tribal communities were still preserved. They were noted for their warlike inclinations and provided the principal source of military power for the Iberian State. The inhabitants of the fertile river valleys were peaceful agriculturists. Their mode of life differed little from that of the Armenians and Medes. The latter evidently referred to the inhabitants of Media Atropatene. Horticulture and viniculture were practised along with cereal agriculture. Iberian towns

were protected by [76] formidable walls, and contained beautiful buildings faced with tile, markets and other public structures. These towns were centers of handicrafts and trade. In addition to Armazis-Tsikhe, the acropolis of Mtskheta, the Iberian towns included Sevsamora on the left bank of the Aragva, and the small fortified settlement of Ideessa on the frontier of Colchis.

The excavations conducted by Georgian archaeologists in the vicinity of Mtskheta have furnished means of determining the exact locations of the Iberian capital of Armazis-Tsikhe and the town of Sevsamora. The latter was located on the left bank of the Aragva, above its confluence with the Kura, near the present village of Tsitsamuri. Armazis-Tsikhe was built on the right bank of the Kura opposite the mouth of the Aragva River [now the town of Bagineti on the eastern end of the Armaz range], and occupied about thirty hectares. A system of strong, protective walls, built of adobe bricks on a base of cut dry-laid sandstone slabs has been uncovered. These walls encircled the mountain and led in steps to the Kura. Buildings excavated include a monumental structure, the roof of which was supported by a number of columns standing within the building.

Buildings of the third and second centuries B. C. reflect contact with Hellenistic culture and the influence of the ancient architecture of Asia Minor, and especially Syria. In the Samthavro cemetery, burials in large clay vessels used for storing agricultural produce belong to this period. These burials illustrate the customs of independent and peaceful agriculturists in the area of Mtskheta. No weapons occurred in these graves. Numerous other objects indicate well-developed textile and pottery industries. There were also metal objects, ornaments (earrings, bracelets, rings, and small bells), engraved bones, and beads of glass and paste. Some of these objects represent local handicraft and artistic traditions originating in the Bronze Age. The pottery, fired red and made of fine well-kneaded clay without decoration, is markedly different from the black-gray pottery found in the direct inhumations of the preceding period.

Moreover, the custom of burial in clay vessels is an indication of cultural relationship with the local rural population of the neighboring eastern portions of western Albania. The metal ornaments, particularly the bracelets with pronounced dorsal curvature, are characteristic of this period throughout almost all Transcaucasia. The "jug" burials include, for the first time, iron rings with cut stones as "jewels," and seals cast in glass. Some of the objects found in the graves, including jewels, beads, and bracelets, indicate trade relations between the inhabitants of Mtskheta and countries of Asia Minor. Burials in clay vessels of about the same period have been found also in Zemo-Avchala and other sites of eastern Georgia (in the Gori, Kaspi, Tbilisi, Sagaredzho, Telavi, Tsiteltskaro, and Bori areas). Seleucid, and later Parthian, coins found in settlements and burials of the third to first centuries B. C. indicate the development of private ownership,

trade relations with the countries of Asia Minor, and the beginning of money transactions.

All archaeological data fit Strabo's account of the occurrence of architecturally sound tile-roofed dwellings in the towns of Iberia and of the presence of market squares and public buildings. The capital of Iberia, an important trade center, was located at the intersection of two trade routes: (a) one leading from the country of the North Caucasian tribes along the Aragva Valley into Armenia; and (b) the other, the river route along the Kura and Rion, connecting the Caspian Sea with trade centers of the eastern Black Sea coast. At this time, the Iberian State had been drawn into the sphere of the commercial interests of the Seleucid State as indicated by a study of the trade route leading through the Caucasus into India in the time of Seleucus Nicator. From the *Kartli-Tskhovreba* we also learn that Pharnabazus, founder of the Iberian State, maintained relations with the states of the Diadochi, particularly with the Seleucids, who apparently helped him to become king. The development [77] of trade in Iberia during the last centuries B. C. is also indicated by Strabo's reference to the navigability of the Kura and its tributaries, and to the existence of a well-developed network of roads and bridges.

Strabo's description of Iberian social structure evidently reflects social conditions prevailing not later than the second century B. C.

According to Strabo, the population of Iberia was divided into four "classes" or social groups: from the first, the most important group, "was selected the king—the oldest and closest in relationship to the preceding king." To the second most important member of this class were delegated the duties of administration of justice and military leadership. The second group included the priests who also dealt with litigations among neighbors. The third included farmers and soldiers. The fourth group included the "servants" who were "slaves of the king," and who provided the imperial family clan with all the necessities of life. Property was held in common, according to group relationship, and each group was supervised by an elder.

This account shows that the hereditary slaveholding aristocracy, headed by the royal family, occupied the ruling position in Iberian society. The authority of the king [Georgian *mepe*] was hereditary in the family clan but its passage from father to son was not mandatory, the oldest member of the family after the king usually being in the line of succession. The new king was formally confirmed by the other members of the royal family and other representatives of the nobility. Nevertheless, the authority of the king was absolute and unlimited. According to Georgian sources, the king appointed the provincial governors and other high functionaries. However, in view of the concept of royal authority as hereditary, such important duties as the administration of justice and military leadership were usually carried out by the closest relative of the king.



A special privilege of the royal family, which it probably shared with other important clans, was the exploitation of the labor of serfs. The latter constituted the "fourth class," a group which Strabo designated as *lovi* or servants, a term widely known in the Seleucid State and in other countries of Asia Minor of that time. Strabo calls them "slaves of the King, providers of all necessities of life" but actually, rather than being slaves, these were communal land tillers, legally free, but burdened with tributes in kind and in labor; their exploitation was the prerogative of the royal family. There probably also existed in those times private estates of the king and of the nobility where slaves—primarily prisoners of war—were used.

The priesthood played an important role in the political and social life of the country. Priests dealt with public affairs and performed rituals that accompanied the treaties with neighboring states in regard to war and peace and the settlement of disputes.

As in neighboring Armenia, Colchis, and Albania, there existed in Iberia wealthy, ancient sanctuaries with extensive landholdings, administered by priests, where the labor of the so-called "sacred slaves" (*hierodules*) was used. Most of these sanctuaries were located on the periphery of the country in mountain areas. Strabo mentions the sanctuary of Leukoteia (belonging, probably, to the local women's fertility cult) in the region of the Moschi, on the frontier of Iberia, Armenia, and Colchis. New official cults instituted by the kings were established in the capital and its surroundings. The priesthood, together with the military aristocracy, constituted the ruling class of Iberia, the slaveholding aristocracy.

Finally, the mass of the population was composed at that time of communities of free peasants, "soldiers and farmers," who, in times of emergency, filled the ranks of the army. This social stratum, designated in ancient Georgian sources as the "people's army" (*eri*), was representative of the primitive tribal social structure, but continued to exist for a long time, even in many slaveholding societies. However, it gradually lost its former role in social and political life, as the national militia [78] was replaced by an army distinct from the people. Furthermore, while formerly this armed population represented the highest authority, it was superseded now by a public authority distinct from the people, in this case that of the emperor supported by an army differentiated from the people.

[78] Survivals of the older tribal structure were still prominent among the Iberian peasants. From Strabo's writings, it is apparent that the peasants lived in communities owning land in common managed by an elder, the head of the community. However, within the community a process of property stratification was taking place inasmuch as the development of crafts and trade and the existence of slaveholding estates tended to break up the older community structure. Among the mountaineer stock-raisers, the older patriarchal relationships survived in full force. In his description of Iberian social structure, Strabo does not mention by any means all the strata of the population. Thus, he fails to deal with the urban population, which included craftsmen and traders. This is to be explained, apparently, by the fact that at that time the traders were foreigners living in Iberia, mainly Syrians and Jews, and, therefore, were not considered as apart of the Iberian nation. No mention is made of slaves, which included prisoners of war and members of other tribes who lacked any social organization of their own.

Iberian soldiers were recruited from among the free Iberian peasants, mainly from among the mountaineers. They formed the infantry and cavalry, and were famous for their high military qualities. Light infantrymen had bows and darts and also large shields and helmets made of hides. Heavy units consisted of armored lancers.

In wars with the Romans, the Iberians exhibited great courage and determination in defending their country. They were skillful not only in formal battles but also in partisan warfare.

The religious life of the Iberians of that time still preserved many features inherited from the Bronze Age. Bronze figurines of animals (deer, mountain goat, bull, and dog) found in burial places indicate a survival of totemism, the existence of deities of the hunt and deities that protected the herds. As agriculture developed, concepts of fertility deities appeared, and there is a development of the worship of the gods of rain, thunder, lightning and stars. Particularly widespread was the cult of the moon, represented in male form, while the sun was worshiped in female form. Spirits, dryads and nymphs were likewise revered.

With the establishment of the state, the kings instituted new cults. The supreme deity of the Iberians was Armaz, the ancient deity of the moon in Asia Minor. Its worship as protector of the state was introduced by Pharnabazus and merged among the people with an ancient popular cult of the moon. Descriptions of the statue of Armaz have been preserved in Georgian literature. He was represented as a dreaded warrior in magnificent armor with sword in hand. As a consequence of political and cultural contacts with Iran, the Mithraic cult also spread among the Iberian nobility.

At the time when, during the last centuries B. C., the strongly centralized state of Iberia existed in eastern Georgia, western Georgia presented a somewhat different picture. The process of the formation of the Georgian nationality and of a unified state was delayed by the fact that the provinces of Western Transcaucasia experienced foreign domination from early times—first by the Achaemenids, later by the Pontic Kingdom, and finally by the Roman Empire. In this respect, an important role was played by the colonial towns of the coast, which constituted in effect state organizations patterned on classical models.

A major-obstacle in overcoming tribal and political fragmentation was the difference between areas in social and economic organization. Colchis, which ancient authors of the time considered coterminous with the Rioni Plain, was filled with prosperous settlements surrounded by orchards, vineyards, and fields where flax [79] and wheat were grown. In the greater and wealthier settlements and towns handicrafts flourished and included weaving, metalworking, the manufacture of pottery, woodworking, leather working, and the manufacture of jewelry.

The social and economic development of Colchis was stimulated by trade relations with the coastal Greek colonies which, during the fourth and third centuries B. C., experienced a period of economic and cultural prosperity. As a result of the trade route through the Caucasus along the Rioni and Kura, the Greek trade centers on the Black Sea could barter goods with Transcaspia and with India. Strabo reports that the Phasis River [modern Rioni] "is navigable up to Sarapanae [modern Sharopan], a fortress which could contain the population of a whole town; from here to the Cyrus [Kura] River is a four-day journey on land on a wagon road. Near the Phasis is located a town of the same name, the commercial port of Colchis." In another place, he cites Patrocles [third century B. C.], who investigated the Caspian seashore and the Caucasus on order of the King Seleucus Nicator, as stating: "Many Indian goods are shipped to the Hyrcanian [Caspian] Sea, thence transported to Albania and shipped on the Kura and through the following places to the Euxine Sea [Black Sea]."

In addition to the Rioni waterway, a well-developed road network existed. Strabo mentions 120 bridges across the Phasis River. The towns of Colchis and the larger settlements of the Rioni Valley traded with the towns along the coast and with traders from abroad. Money was in wide circulation. Small Colchidian silver coins were in great demand as a medium of exchange. With the growth of trade, gold coins came into circulation, the staters of Alexander the Great and of Lysimachus.

Archaeological evidence indicates the further growth of the ancient settlements in Dabla-Gomi and Vani during the third century. The quantity of Greek amphora fragments—greater than ever before—indicates more lively trade with Greek colonies. Building remains uncovered in excavations at Vani lead to the conclusion that this

ancient site was once a large and wealthy town. materials found in cemeteries of the times reflect distinctly increasing economic stratification. It is illustrated especially well in the Vani cemetery, which contained quite a few valuable objects of the fourth and third centuries B. C.

During the third century, the custom of burial in large clay vessels was still preserved in Colchis. In addition to the graves in Dabla-Gomi in Samtredskii Raion and in Partskhahakanevi in Kutaisi Raion, the custom has also been noted in a grave near Telovani in Van Raion.

Thus, the archaeological data from the agricultural areas of the Rioni Valley and foothills point to a highly developed agriculture, handicrafts and trade, to a growing use of money, and to developed social and economic stratification, particularly from the end of the fourth and beginning of the third centuries. The Colchidian State seems to have arisen at this time. Its rather small area included the Rioni Valley up the course of the Kvirili River to the fortress of Sarapanae which protected the entrance to Colchis from the east. However, in view of the factors mentioned earlier, the state of Colchis at that time was neither strong nor stable, and was compelled to acknowledge its dependence on the powerful adjacent state of Iberia. Strabo wrote: "The glory that this country possessed in ancient times is shown by the myths which tell of the campaign of Jason...and of that of Phrixus which preceded it. The succeeding kings who ruled over a country divided into *sceptuchias* had not much glory." The historical division of the country into tribal territories possessed by *sceptuchoi* [scepter-bearers], the descendants of ancient tribal nobility, continued, and the kings of Colchis were not able to overcome it at that time.

Economic and cultural relations of the local population with another Greek colony, Dioscurias, are indicated from excavations at Sukhumi and adjacent districts. burials dated from the fifth to the second centuries have been found. In addition to the customary modes of burial, evidences of cremation, a Greek custom, have been [80] found. The burials are those of ordinary inhabitants of Dioscurias. The grave inventory indicates a mixed ethnic group and is similar in content to that of the "jug" burials of Dabla-Gomi and in part of Partskhanakanevi but contained, in addition to local articles, a greater amount of Greek pottery than was found in the latter places.

Of no less interest is the material of the same period originating in another settlement discovered in Esheri Raion near Sukhumi. Judging from finds made in the cemetery, this settlement must have existed even before the establishment of the Greek colony. A building destroyed by fire dates from the fourth to third centuries B. C. Finds included fragments of roof tiles and water pipes, loom weights and fragments of Greek amphorae. The graves indicate, by the mode of burial as well as by their inventory, not only the

close contacts of the local population with the colonists but also the considerable cultural influence of the latter. Excavations at the construction site of the seaport in Ochamchire [Ochemchiri] have shown that a Greek trading post existed there at the end of the fifth and in the fourth centuries, and that much of its population was of local origin.

The process of social stratification spread not only to the river valleys, but also in the mountain areas adjacent to the passes through which flowed trade with the North Caucasus. Thus, in Lechkhume, in the burial ground of an ancient settlement already in existence in the Bronze Age, the graves of the fourth to third centuries B. C. showed an increase in the quantity of valuable objects as well as coins as compared with an earlier period. Tribes with a stable primitive tribal social structure continued to live in other mountain areas.

Thus, high in the mountains, we find the strong tribal federation of the Svans. headed by a leader whom Strabo called "king" (*basileus*). His authority was limited by a council of 300 clan elders. The "peoples army" of Svanetia could place a great number of soldiers into the field. A similar organization also existed among other mountain tribes.

The Achaeians, Zygians, and Heniochians, inhabiting the coast between Sindica and Dioscurias where wooded mountains fall steeply to the sea, followed a comparatively primitive mode of life. Lacking sufficient soil for cultivation, the inhabitants of this almost inaccessible locality lived by piracy. striking terror among the seafarers and travelers and also among the inhabitants of coastal towns and settlements. These people were politically divided into small tribes headed by so-called *sceptuchoi* ("scepter-bearers"), who, in turn, were subordinated to leaders of larger federations. Strabo called the latter "tyrants" or "kings." The majority of the small mountain tribes living above Dioscurias, and only coming down to purchase salt, led a solitary life, did not communicate with one another, and spoke different languages.

Thus, in spite of the high level of social and economic development attained by the population of the Rioni Valley, where pronounced social and economic stratification had come into being, Western Transcaucasia. as a result of diversity in social organization in the fourth to fifth centuries B. C., had not yet achieved conditions favorable for the formation of a unified state on a local basis. Next to the Colchis principality which, according to the Georgian Annals or *Kartlis-Tskhovreba*, was politically dependent from Iberia, the mountains harbored the independent tribal federation of the Svans, and small, isolated highland tribes which were independent of Colchis influence. The leaders of the coastal tribes of the Achaeians, Zygians, and Heniochians also remained independent. The coastal districts adjacent to the Greek colonies constituted the territory of these city states. In the third century, however, the existence of a state organization in the territory of western Georgia is indicated by the appearance of coined gold money. We have gold

coins [staters] with the name of King Aka dating from the second half or end of the third century B. C. King Aka evidently was the ruler of Colchis. The kings mentioned by Pliny probably belong to that period.

[81] The crisis that affected the Hellenistic Greek-Macedonian states, including the Seleucid State, with particular force during the second century affected trade relationships unfavorably, and resulted in a gradual decline and extinction of the Greek colonies on the Caucasian shores of the Black Sea since their prosperity was wholly dependent on broad international trade. The trade of Phasis became limited primarily to barter with the districts of Colchis further inland, but did not reach even as far as the Suram Pass leading to the Kura Valley. This gradual deterioration of a wealthy trading center was accompanied by a sharp debasement of "Colchidian" coinage and then by its discontinuation. The inflow of the gold coins of Alexander and Lysimachus first diminished and then ceased completely.

Moreover, these conditions could not arrest the inner growth of Colchis where economic progress continued. Independently of Greek towns, barter with the North Caucasus, the Bosphoric Kingdom and the countries of Asia Minor was carried on overland through the mountain passes.

The cessation of the inflow of staters of Alexander and Lysimachus resulted in the issue of so-called "barbarian imitations" of the popular coins which spread in western Georgia and partly beyond its limits. At the same time, with the weakening of Greek cultural influence, which spread through the country from the coastal trading centers, the coining of these imitations became increasingly; barbarized.

With the ascendance of the Pontic Kingdom at the end of the second century B. C., Colchis, as well as Armenia Minor and the Kingdom of Bosphorus, became a part of the domain of Mithridates Eupator. It was administered by a specially designated royal governor. Later, after Pompey's campaign in Transcaucasia and the defeat of the Pontic Kingdom, Colchis fell under the protectorate of Rome. It was left under the administration of local rulers, but Roman garrisons were established in coastal towns, and the local chiefs had to be confirmed by the Romans.

Greek and Roman writers, as well as writers on Armenia in the Middle Ages, termed Albania the country on the lower Kura and Araxes, extending northward to the main range of the Caucasus, eastward to the Caspian Sea, and including in the west the Iora Valley to Alazani, the Karaiaz and Shirak steppes, and in the south the Araxes Valley and the Mughan steppe. Strabo, utilizing the records of the earlier writers, provides valuable information on Albania and its inhabitants during the last centuries B. C. The level of social and economic development in Albania was at that time lower than that of

Iberia. Accumulations of sediment and the small islands and shallows forming at the estuary of the Kura, the low coast covered with dunes and lacking suitable anchorage for vessels, prevented the Albanians from becoming a seafaring people and from participating in maritime trade. This caused Strabo to remark that the Albanians, "distinguished by handsome looks and tall stature, are good-natured, not inclined to trade, and in most cases do not use money."

The soil of Albania was very fertile and produced "all kinds of fruit, even the most delicate ones, and all kinds of plants, including evergreens." The people practised agriculture, but the soil was tilled with primitive wooden plows. Grape-growing flourished, and the yield of vineyards was high. Nevertheless, the Albanians, according to Strabo, were more inclined to lead a pastoral life than the Iberians and were closer to the nomadic type.

Archaeological investigations in Azerbaijan make it possible to supplement Strabo's reports with more precise information. The Avtaran Valley, situated in the southern foothills of the Caucasus range, is notable for great fertility and an excellent, mild climate. The Alazani Valley, the Nukha and Kirovabad raions, and the Kura-Araxes plain were inhabited since ancient times by people who practised agriculture.

A certain type of pottery is characteristic of that period of Albanian history. The pottery exhibits a great variety of fanciful forms: small pitchers with a threefold [82] petaled rim; small decanters with long beak-shaped spouts provided with a clay grid for straining solid particles (grape residue or grains of barley in barley beer); small vases on high stands; plates and cups on tripods, with or without handles; flasks with round bases; and vessels similar to teapots [*aski*]. This was first discovered at Ialoilu-Tepe in Kutakshen Raion and the culture represented there has been designated as the "Ialoilu-Tepe culture." Buildings at the settlements of Nidzh and Vartashen and in the Alazani Valley are attributed to this period.

The Ialoilu-Tepe culture was represented in the above-mentioned raions by interments with flexed skeletons. Typical of grave inventories were bronze ornaments— beads, bracelets with thickened ends overlapping each other, rings, and small bells. Frequently recurring objects include beads of glass or glass-like paste, sometimes of carved carnelian, crooked iron pruning knives and, in the Alazani graves, weapons, spearheads, daggers, etc. This Ialoilu-Tepe culture, created by an agricultural people, pertains to the period from the fourth to the first centuries B. C.

Numerous burials in large, clay vessels found in a cemetery near Mingechaur correspond chronologically to the Ialoilu-Tepe culture. These vessels, in which agricultural products were stored, and later used for burial, were placed on their sides in the grave pits; around

them were placed other large jars with food for the deceased. In addition, the graves yielded vessels of yellow clay with painted decoration, as well as iron weapons in male graves, and agricultural implements. Beads occurred in female graves; the majority were of jasper, carnelian, glass and glass- like paste. Most of the ornaments were made of bronze, and imported articles included Egyptian scarabs and ring- seals with glass or carnelian inserts bearing representations of animals. In the Mingechaur "jug" graveyard, on the right bank of the Kura, which pertains to the period from the fourth to the first centuries B. C., the early group of burials still reflects primitive communal social structure in the last stage of its dissolution. The economy of this period was characterized by highly developed animal husbandry, agriculture, and handicrafts. Graves of the first century B. C. contained many imported objects and coins, such as Parthian drachmae and Roman republican denarii. The ancient population of Mingechaur, located on a caravan route at the Kura River crossing, played a major role in intertribal exchange.

A culture similar in character to that of Mingechaur has also been found in the Mughan steppe. It is represented by burials in clay vessels of the Dzhafarkhan cemetery in which the pottery included vessels similar in form to those of Ialoilu- Tepe burials in clay vessels of the same period have been found also on the Milsk steppe. In the Kirovabad and Khanlar area, a farming culture of the second and first centuries B. C. is represented by burials in tombs constructed of adobe bricks.

The archaeological material described above indicates that the data on the economy of ancient Albania furnished by Strabo relate to different parts of this country. His report concerning the excellent conditions of agriculture on the plain referred to the coastal area of the Kura River and to the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains. When he writes that "the whole plain is irrigated by rivers and other water courses better than the Babylonian and Egyptian plains, and for this reason has abundant pastureland," Strabo has in mind, without doubt, the Kura-Araxes plain and the Mughan steppe with its fertile Araxes alluvium and the developed ancient irrigation system. On the Karaiaz and Shirak steppes, in ancient Cambysene and adjacent districts, there existed, during the same period, excellent conditions for nomadic stock- raising. Here the stock-breeders from the surrounding mountains gathered to spend the winter. Usually, these nomads would render ready assistance to the Iberians and Albanians in their wars against foreign enemies, but at the same time they would also attack agricultural settlements and disturb the peaceful labor of their inhabitants. Hunting played an important role in the economy of the nomadic tribes of Albania, whence Strabo's words: "The Albanians and their dogs are fond of hunting."



[83] At the beginning of the first century B. C., the tribes of Azerbaijan were united in a large tribal federation headed by the Albanians. As a result of close economic and cultural ties, a process of tribal consolidation took place. The languages of the different tribes began to merge into a single Albanian language, and in the middle of the first century B. C. there appeared in Azerbaijan an early slaveholding Albanian state, which controlled the fertile regions of the southern foothills of the Caucasus and the left bank of the Kura, and which bordered in the west on Iberia.

Strabo wrote: "Now one king is the ruler of all, while before, each tribe having its own language had an individual 'king'; there were twenty-six languages owing to an absence of relations among them." Exchange of goods was still poorly developed among Albanians. This is proved by the lack of coins dated prior to the first century B. C., and by Strabo's remarks that the Albanians "for the most part do not even use money, and cannot count beyond 100, and in the exchange of goods they do not know accurate measures and weights." Primitive social relationships among the Albanians are indicated also by their custom "to bury together with the deceased all his property, and, therefore, they live in poverty, foregoing the possessions of ancestors."

In the economically most advanced province of Albania adjacent to Iberia [eastern part of present-day Kakhetia], there existed an ancient, wealthy sanctuary. The area which belonged to it constituted a religious principality. Strabo reports that the "holy land" belonging to the sanctuary was extensive and densely populated, and that it was ruled by a priest who was the most respected person after the king. Similar ancient and wealthy sanctuaries [the Temple States of Asia Minor], possessing vast landholdings and ruled by a noble priestly clan, were also known in the neighboring countries of Iberia, Armenia, Cappadocia, and Pontus.

The state of Albania did not include all parts of ancient Albania. This was because during the period when class relations developed, prior to the establishment of a single state, the southern parts of Albania had already been conquered by powerful neighboring states. The province of Caspiane was taken over by Media Atropatene, evidently during the third or second centuries B. C., and Sacasene and Otene were annexed at the beginning of the first century by Tigranes II [Tigranes I in the *Cambridge Ancient History*], King of Greater Armenia. As a result of these territorial losses, the Kura River became the southern boundary of Albania with the exception of a small area south of the Araxes estuary.

The Albanians were known as excellent soldiers, fighting on foot or on horse, in heavy armor as well as lightly armed. Their weapons, like those of the Iberians, consisted of bows and arrows, spears and leather shields and helmets. When the necessity arose, they

could put into the field an even greater number of soldiers than the Iberians. In the war against the Romans, the Albanians raised an army of 60,000 infantrymen and 22,000 horsemen. Essentially, their army was a national one, which defended its country unanimously and courageously. In battle, the Albanian army was commanded by the King himself or by his nearest relative.

The Albanian religion of the period was closely connected with ancient local cults established during the Bronze Age. It was the primitive magic of herdsmen and hunters. a cult of wild and domesticated animals, represented by numerous figurines of animals and birds made of bronze and clay, and in the zoomorphic handles of vessels, ends of bracelets, and coins. The animal pictures were supposed to protect the contents of the vessel, or the person wearing the ornament, from evil spirits.

Associated with the development of agriculture was the further evolution and transformation of the ancient worship of the heavens and of the stars. According to Strabo, the Albanians worshiped the sun, Zeus (god of thunder and lightning), and the moon. The latter was given the greatest respect, since the Albanians, like the Iberians, regarded it as a male deity of fertility. Its sanctuary, mentioned above, [84] was located on the Iberian frontier. In this sanctuary, according to Strabo, the custom of human sacrifice still prevailed and divination was based on the fall of the victim killed by the sacrificial spear.

The southern part of Azerbaijan constituted the northern part of Media, and was a part of the Achaemenid State. In contrast to so-called Greater Media, this province was called Media Minor. During the reign of the last Achaemenid Darius III (Codomannus) [336-330 B. C.], Media Minor was ruled by the Satrap Atropates, who served with his soldiers in Darius' army against Alexander. In addition to Medes, Atropates led Albanians and succeeded in warding off the conquest of his country by the Macedonians. Later, Atropates managed to obtain Alexander's recognition as Satrap of Media. When Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, Parthia, and Greater Media came under the sovereignty of Seleucus Nicator, Atropates received Media Minor as an independent domain and kingdom, and became thus the founder of a royal dynasty in this country. From this time, the ancient writers referred to Media Minor as Media Atropatene. In the works of medieval Armenian writers, the designation "Atropatene" took the form "Atrpatakan" or "Atrapayakan," "Adurbigan" in Syriac texts, "Aderbigan" in Byzantine writings; it is the basis of the modern name for Azerbaijan [in Persia Azerbaijan].

The location of Media Atropatene has been recorded by Strabo and Polybius. It lay north of Armenia and Matiane, and northwest of Greater Media. Thus, in the north it included a part of Caspiane, in the west it bordered along the Araxes on Otene (the province of the Utians), and in the southwest it reached to Lake Urmia. The northern part of Media

Atropatene was covered with high mountains and had a severe climate; the rest was tableland, fertile and suitable for agriculture. In the mountains of the northeast and east of Media Atropatene lived the Cadusians, Amadrians, and Kurtians and nomadic stock-raising tribes who were belligerent and, according to Strabo, engaged in banditry. Settled agriculturists lived in the plains.

Atropatene was a powerful and economically developed state. On the basis of slavery and private property, farming and stock-raising developed rapidly during the last centuries B. C. The capital of Media Atropatene was the town of Gandzak which served as a summer resort for the kings. The winter residence of Phraaspa was located at the strongly fortified site of Vere. Through Atropatene led the trade routes which connected this country with eastern Transcaucasia and with the Black Sea as well as with Ecbatana, capital of Media, and the city of Seleucia on the Tigris. In the cities and larger settlements various handicrafts developed, among them the weaving of fabrics from camel hair. According to Polybius and Strabo, the rulers of Media Atropatene possessed considerable military power. The country could raise up to 10,000 horsemen and 40,000 infantrymen. The mountain tribes were distinguished by their particularly good fighting qualities, especially the Cadusians, who fought mainly on foot, and were known for their skillful use of spears.

The kings of Media Atropatene, depending on military strength and on marriages with the royal houses of Armenia, Syria and later Parthia, conducted a vigorous foreign policy. In the third century B. C., the country was ruled by the venerable Artabazanes, whom Polybius describes as "one of the mightiest and wisest of rulers." In 222 Artabazanes supported Molon, a satrap of the Syrian King Antiochus III, who revolted and declared himself an independent king. After the suppression of Molon's revolt, Antiochus III undertook a campaign against Artabazanes and compelled the latter to acknowledge his sovereignty.

Subsequently, the kings of Media Atropatene had to fight many times against their powerful neighbors, the kings of Armenia and Parthia, who used every opportunity to cut down the domains of the former. However, the kings of Atropatene always resisted stubbornly, and succeeded in recapturing the lost provinces.

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## **B. Greater Armenia**

[85] During the second and first centuries B. C., Greater Armenia rose to great power among the slaveholding states of Transcaucasia. It united within its borders almost all Armenian lands, subjugated some Iberian and Albanian regions, and conquered many other portions of Asia Minor. Greater Armenia and Sophene became independent of the

Seleucids after the Romans defeated Antiochus III at the battle of Magnesia in 190 B. C. At that time, the rulers of Greater Armenia and of Sophene declared themselves independent princes.

The king of Greater Armenia from 189-161 was Artaxias [Armenian Artashes], the founder of the royal dynasty of the Artashesids [or Artaxiads]. The large population of the Armenian rural communities, among whom property stratification was not very pronounced at the time, contributed excellent warriors for the army. With the aid of this army, the young rapidly growing state entered a period of extensive conquests.

As in the case of Antiochus III's war against Rome, when Artaxias acted in the interests of the Romans and helped defeat Antiochus, the Armenian king continued to follow a foreign policy in accord with that of Rome. In the war between Pharnaces, King of Pontus, and Eumenes, King of Pergamum (183-179), Artaxias helped the latter and his allies by taking advantage of the protection of the Romans and thus strengthened his political position.

Antiochus IV, who succeeded in stabilizing the sovereignty of the Seleucids in Syria, undertook a major and successful campaign against Armenia. He invaded the domain of Artaxias far into the interior and compelled the latter to submit. However, the death of Antiochus once more liberated Artaxias. The latter interfered actively with the affairs of neighboring states, and helped in every way to further the dissolution of the Seleucid Empire. Soon Artaxias had succeeded in expanding his territory to include adjacent Transcaucasian states. Strabo wrote:

One says that Armenia was originally a small country, but that it was expanded by Artaxias and Zariadres...by annexing lands from the surrounding nations as follows: Caspiene, Faunitida and Basoropeda from the Medes; the slopes of Pariadres, Khordzene and Gogarene, which lie on this side of the Kura, from the Iberians; Karenitida and Xerxena, which border on Armenia Minor, or are even a part of it, from the Chalybes and Mossipoiks; Akilisene and the province along the Anti-Taurus from the Kataonis; and Taronitides from the Syrians, so that all these nationalities speak now one single language.

In addition to territorial gain, war booty and political advantages, the victorious soldiers of Artaxias provided a great number of prisoners who became slaves. He donated some to his generals and intimates and kept some for himself. According to an account by an Armenian historian of the fifth century A. D., Moses of Choren [Movses Khorenats'i/Xorenats'i], Artaxias presented 500 slaves to his *sparapet*, the functionary in charge of military affairs [commander-in-chief] and labor duties. The slaves were settled in great numbers on the lands of the king and the nobility, where they were employed to

till the land and for all other labor. The dissolution of the ancient communal institutions was greatly aided thereby.

By this time, ancient Armavir, the former center of the state, no longer served its original purpose, either economically or politically. The principal caravan routes which crossed Armenia, connecting Asia Minor through Parthia and Bactria with India and China, bypassed Armavir. For this reason, Artaxias founded a new city at the bend of the Araxes River, and called it Artaxata [Armenian Artashat]. This city soon experienced great prosperity as numerous Greek, Syrian, and Jewish traders and artisans established themselves in it.

[86] A considerable portion of the population of conquered countries was settled in the interior provinces of Armenia. According to Moses of Choren, Artaxias "ordered the determination of the boundary lines of villages and *agaraks* [farms]" and "the population of Armenia was increased by bringing in many foreigners, who were settled in towns, valleys and plains." In settling the newcomers, a redistribution of land took place and boundary markers were used for the purpose. Three such markers with inscriptions in Aramaic have been found in the Nor-Baiazet region near Lake Sevan.

In connection with the development of economic, political, and cultural life, the need for literacy made itself strongly felt in Armenia. Aramaic, which had been widely in use in Asia Minor since the fifth century B. C., was brought to the country, probably by Syrian merchants. The use of Aramaic in diplomatic correspondence by Armenian rulers was established by the end of the fourth century B. C. During the third century under the Seleucids, Greek was the language of official documents in international relations and in private legal affairs in Armenia. Greek was also used by the priesthood in the temples of towns affected by the influence of Greek culture.

The oldest Greek inscriptions are connected with Artaxias' reign. These are four of the seven Greek inscriptions discovered on rocks not far from the ruins of ancient Armavir, and, as assumed by scholars, on the site of an ancient sanctuary. They constitute valuable sources which throw light on the political and cultural life of Armenia, and also on its relationships with other states of Asia Minor.

The growing power of the slave-owning nobility of Armenia resulted in an intensification of the opposition between social classes. The measures taken for re-settling in Armenia people from conquered provinces and the granting of land to them and to the nobility, which constituted the social basis of royal power, could not but affect the interests of the free communal peasants. The state was temporarily weakened by internal disturbances due to the pronounced class differences that divided Armenian society.

Under Artaxias' grandson, Tigranes II (95-55 B. C.), Greater Armenia attained the height of its power. Not only was the unification of Armenian lands completed at that time (with the exception of Armenia Minor which had been annexed earlier by the Pontic Kingdom); but the boundaries of the Armenian State were vastly expanded by conquest. The accumulation of material wealth, based on the development of the slaveholding economy and on the use of manpower, created the preconditions for military success. The foreign political situation was also favorable. Beginning with the second century, Rome pursued energetically a policy of interference in the affairs of Asia Minor, and supported all states which would contribute to the weakening of the Seleucids.

At the end of the second and at the beginning of the first centuries, when the Seleucid State was moving steadily to its final ruin and when the prominence of Armenia might have evoked opposition from the Romans, the latter became involved in internal struggles to such an extent that they left the countries of Asia Minor to their own fate. This favorable situation was utilized by Tigranes II and by Mithridates Eupator, King of Pontus. Their states became more powerful and expanded their boundaries.

At first, Tigranes II captured the lands of Sophene's king (Artana) and joined them to his dominion in 94 B. C.; this essentially completed the unification of all Armenian provinces into one state. Its domains bordered now on Cappadocia. Mithridates of Pontus, who aimed at the conquest of Cappadocia, concluded an alliance with Tigranes, sealing it by marrying his daughter Cleopatra to the latter. Then Mithridates and Tigranes proceeded to reach an understanding in regard to the goals of their future conquests: Tigranes obtained the right to the border provinces of Arsacid Parthia, Syria and the surrounding small countries; while Mithridates claimed Asia Minor, the Black Sea coast, and the Greek islands and mainland.

[87] Mithridates seized all Roman possessions in Asia Minor. The people, who were tired of the extortions of Roman provincial governors, greeted him as a liberator. Not limiting himself to Asia, Mithridates occupied also the Balkan territory of Greece. However, the Romans, under Sulla's leadership, defeated him in a number of engagements, and in 85 B. C. he was forced to make peace and give up all the conquests he had made in Greece and Asia Minor since the beginning of the war.

In the meantime, Tigranes had conquered the Albanian provinces of Sacasene, Otene, and Orchistene, and Symbace, the northwestern province of Media Atropatene. Then he reached an agreement with the Kings of Albania, Iberia, and Media Atropatene, whereby these rulers bound themselves to contribute contingents to Tigranes' army. Thereafter, he invaded Mesopotamia with a large army, and captured the northwestern provinces of the Parthian Empire, *i.e.*, Adiabene, Mygdonia, Osroene, and Corduene [Karduene]. The Parthians were also forced to cede to Tigranes the part of Media occupied by the

Armenian army, including its capital Ecbatana [modern Hamadan]. The neighboring province of Mygdonia, which was of strategic and economic importance, was transformed into a separate Armenian state with its capital at Nisibis [modern Nisibin or Nusaybin]. Tigranes entrusted his brother Guras with its administration. The Arsacids renounced their glamorous title "King of Kings," which Tigranes now claimed for himself and his successors.

Tigranes then proceeded to capture the last remains of the Seleucid possessions in Syria. By seizing Commagene, he achieved control of all crossings over the Euphrates from Asia Minor and the Levant to Armenia and Parthia.

In 84 B. C. Tigranes conquered northern Syria, eastern Cilicia and the greater part of Phoenicia including the fortress of Ptolemais. The Seleucid Empire was now completely Tigranes' domain. Antioch on the Orontes, the capital of Syria, became one of the residences of the Armenian kings. Coins bearing Tigranes' likeness were coined in Antioch. Syria and eastern Cilicia [the so-called plain of Cilicia], together with Commagene, were united into one separate administrative province governed by Magadat, Tigranes' representative.

Finally, taking advantage of Sulla's death, Tigranes and Mithridates recaptured Cappadocia. According to a previously concluded agreement, Cappadocia was annexed by the Pontic Kingdom while the Melitene district went to Greater Armenia. The flourishing towns of Cilicia and Mazaka, the capital of Cappadocia, were ravaged. Many inhabitants of Corduene, Adiabene, Cilicia and Cappadocia, particularly those who had lived in towns, were forcibly evacuated to Armenia, with all their property, and resettled principally in Tigranes' new capital, Tigranocerta. Thus, from a ruler of a small state which he inherited from his ancestors, Tigranes became the sovereign of a huge empire that reached from the Kura River to the borders of Palestine and from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea.

As a result of the expansion of the empire, the capital of Artaxata, which was now in the northwestern corner of Tigranes' empire, could no longer serve as the main political center. Tigranes established his new capital at Tigranocerta [Tigranokert] on the banks of the river Nicephoria, a tributary of the Tigris, in a fertile location at the crossroads of the trade routes to India, to Cappadocia and Pontus, and to Syria and Cilicia. The new city grew rapidly. The Armenian nobility were forced to move there with the imperial court, under threat of confiscation of property. In addition, 300,000 citizens from towns of Assyria, Osroene, Corduene and Adiabene were forcibly settled in the new capital. After the occupation of Cappadocia and Cilicia, the citizens of Mazaka and other towns, mainly artisans and traders, shared the same fate. Appian reports that the new city was surrounded by a strong, high wall in which the stables were located. The imperial palace

was surrounded by orchards, parks, and ponds. The building of a magnificent theatre of Greek design was begun.

[88] However, in contrast to the former Armenia, the new state of Tigranes II lacked organic unity and was internally weak. Tigranes' empire was an unstable association of heterogeneous provinces, which were on different levels of economic development and included inhabitants dissimilar in character, culture, and language. In addition to Hellenic cities with a slave economy and a refined culture with all their inherent social conflicts, it included nomadic tribes with a primitive mode of life. Naturally, the provinces with a population speaking the Armenian language constituted the core of the region under his sway.

Like other kings of the Hellenistic East, Tigranes II was an absolute monarch, and was the supreme ruler of the central provinces of Armenia, as well as of the subjugated territories with their natural wealth. He disposed at will of the entire population of these territories and of all their private and communal property. Tigranes administered the country with the help of numerous functionaries, the highest of whom enjoyed special trust and were members of the imperial court. The presence of central provinces constituting the core of the empire and of peripheral conquered provinces, was reflected in the administrative organization of this vast territory. The most fertile lands of the central provinces constituted the inheritable domains of the imperial dynasty, the imperial estates. Some of these were inherited imperial property, and others were formerly the property of aristocratic families who ceded them to the imperial house in exchange for privileges or services. The conquered provinces were divided into separate districts ruled by governors, who were appointed by the emperor and who held in their hands both the military power and civil authority, in the manner of the satraps of the Seleucid State. The governors were selected from hereditary families and distinguished nobility, and sometimes even from among the members of the imperial household. Their task was the effective organization of the defense of the borders of the empire. The dominant class in the country upon which the imperial power rested was the slave- holding aristocracy to which the priesthood also belonged. The large landed estates were its economic support.

One entire district—Anaitida [Armenian Anahitakan]—in Akisilene in the Upper Euphrates Valley was the sanctuary of the goddess Anahit. The chief priest, who was often the brother of the emperor, was considered to be the second most important person in the state. The positions of the high clergy of large sanctuaries were usually hereditary in a noble family which had possessed the sanctuary since ancient times, or were bestowed as a privilege by the emperor.

The most important posts in the state were filled by members of the higher nobility, who kept them permanently in their family and passed them on to their descendants. The



representatives of the higher nobility also occupied the commanding posts in the army. The peripheral districts which were organized in separate administrative units were merely held in trust under specific conditions by the governors.

The most important centers of the economic life of Greater Armenia were the *dastakerts*, the private domains of the slaveholding nobility. In rewarding his entourage with grants, the king would bestow lands, together with the people living on them. The *dastakerts* represented fortified castles with adjoining buildings, pastures, gardens, orchards, and vineyards. The labor of slaves and semi-serfs was widely used on these estates. Estates belonging to the wealthy sanctuaries, the revenues of which were used by the priesthood that managed them, exploited the labor of "sacred slaves" (*hierodules*) and of dependent landowners.

Slave labor was widely used in the construction of cities and fortifications, in salt processing plants, stone quarries and in mining as well as in cities and the land belonging thereto occupied by a Hellenized population, which introduced the features usual in a slave economy.

[89] The basic mass of the population was formed by the free peasantry which led a communal way of life. They had only the use of the land and, in return, were obliged to pay taxes, to contribute all kinds of labor corvee, and, in addition, to surrender a part of their crops. Those who lived on royal lands were considered "royal workers" and placed in the same category as the semi-dependent peasants in other Hellenistic states. As before, an elder headed the village community and it was his duty to deliver the taxes to the royal treasury. At the beginning, the majority of slaves were war prisoners who were settled on land and provided with the necessary tools, whose status thus approximated that of dependent peasants. A special form of the exploitation of labor was the practice, widespread in the Hellenistic East, of forcibly moving entire families from the conquered provinces to the royal estates.

Thus, Armenian society in Tigranes' time was a fully formed slaveholding structure, although compared with that of Greece and Rome, it was less developed. It retained institutions characteristic of earlier slaveholding societies and common in the ancient East, such as debt indenture, the resettlement of populations by the removal of entire families to other provinces, and the settlement of slaves on the land.

Tigranes promoted the development of international trade in every way. He took care that highways were kept safe and in good condition, and supervised the planning of extensive urban construction work along the principal trade routes.

With the disintegration of the Seleucid State, Tigranes and Mithridates of Pontus made an attempt to maintain international trade by their own efforts. Mithridates took care of the development of the northern trade routes through the countries of Transcaucasia and the Kingdom of Bosphorus, while Tigranes was concerned with the routes leading through Asia Minor. This largely explains Tigranes' policy of conquest, and the support he received from the ruling classes of the Hellenic cities, *i.e.*, traders and wholesalers, large slaveowners and workshop proprietors. Trade yielded huge revenues for the imperial treasury in the form of duties.

Among the Armenian cities of that period, Armavir, the ancient capital, and the two new capitals, Artashat and Tigranocerta, as well as the towns of Vardgesavan [later Vagarshapat], Van, Ervandashat and others, played major roles. In these cities the Armenian inhabitants were of two groups: the nobility or ruling class; and the laboring class or city proletariat. The prevailing element of the urban population, however, was that of the Greeks and Syrians, and, in Tigranocerta, probably also of Cappadocians. Each city had a temple for its principal deity-protector. A characteristic feature of Armenian cities in those times was the existence of land owned by the cities and settled by farmers, who enjoyed citizenship rights on the land allotted to them.

In addition to the widespread development of the transit trade in Armenia, we should not lose sight of the growth of the production of trade goods in Armenia itself, of its internal trade, and of the export of local products to other countries.

Of the crafts, metallurgy became highly developed through the use of local iron, copper, and lead deposits for the manufacture of weapons and tools in large quantities. Other important items produced were pottery, artifacts of stone and wood, furniture and household articles, leather articles and all kinds of woven cloth, luxurious fabrics and rugs, dyestuffs and jewelry.

The high level of the building arts is illustrated by the excavations at Garni, 27 kilometers from Yerevan at the foot of the Gegham Mountains. This was a fortified summer residence of the Armenian kings, built on a high cliff above steep gorges through which flows the mountain stream of Azat. Adjacent to the fortress was a large and wealthy settlement. The ruins of a very remarkable temple, belonging to the second century A. D., have been preserved at Garni. However, excavations also revealed remains of older structures. Of especial interest were the strong defensive walls and towers, built of huge,

skillfully hewn basalt [90] blocks, laid without mortar and reinforced with iron clamps sealed with lead. The fortress wall was built about the third century B. C.

The fortress of Garni with the imperial residence, and the growing settlement nearby, undoubtedly played an important role during Tigranes' reign, and continued to do so to an even greater degree in the following centuries.

Armenian soldiers formed the basic core of Tigranes' great army. In addition, allied princes and subordinated rulers contributed numerous auxiliary contingents which lent to Tigranes' army the appearance of a mixture typical for the armies of the great empires of the Near East. Plutarch, in describing Tigranes' army, writes that during the war of Lucullus against Tigranes, there assembled for the defense of Tigranocerta [Tigranokerta] in 69 B. C., "the general army of Armenians and Gordieni, kings with a general militia of Medes and Adiabeni, from the sea through Babylon many Arabs, and from the Caspian Sea, in great numbers, Albanians and their neighbors the Iberians, and a considerable number of people living along the Araxes River." Tigranes' army differed from the armies of Hellenistic states in that mercenary troops played a very insignificant role, while hired soldiery constituted the core of armies such as those of the Seleucids and of the Ptolemies.

The standing army of Armenia was composed of horsemen armed with lances and curved sabers, a special detachment of whom was completely armor-clad, and of special units of mounted archers. Infantry was recruited in case of war. During the Roman wars it was reorganized according to the Roman pattern. The army was also provided with special units of sappers, and with war chariots and machines. The size of the army may be judged by Roman reports which indicate that the number of the Armenians in individual battles attained 300,000.

The maintenance of the army, the court and the administrative organization, necessitated huge sums, which were available since the imperial treasury had grown to unprecedented proportions. Tigranes possessed fortified repositories filled with gold and various treasures. Such were the castles of Babirsa and Olana in the vicinity of the towns of Artaxata and Artagers on the Euphrates. The main sources of their replenishment were war booty, revenues from royal estates, state taxes and customs duties.

As economic relations became more complex, and as internal and foreign trade expanded, currency and capital appeared in Armenia. A pressing need arose for Armenian currency that would be acceptable throughout Tigranes' empire. A reorganization of the monetary system was undertaken for this purpose. The coining of gold money began. In addition, a great amount of silver tetradrachmas and bronze change money was coined. All coins bore the image of the King Tigranes and also

carried a Greek inscription with his name. Furthermore, Seleucid, Parthian and Roman coinage was in circulation.

Armenian religion of the period was characterized by syncretism. Deities and cults which had originated in the period of Urartu and in still earlier times, were perpetuated in numerous ancient sanctuaries. Zoroastrianism also penetrated into Armenia, and found widespread acceptance among the higher classes of society.

The most revered deity among the people was the goddess Anahit, whose cult had come to Armenia from Bactria. This cult was connected with secret rites involving the worship of water and fire. The concept of this goddess merged with that of the female fertility goddesses of Asia Minor. The most famous shrine of Anahit was at Acilisene. The supreme deity of Armenia was Aramazd whose temple stood in Kamakh. Mithra [Mher], god of fire, sun and cosmic light, had a temple in Derjan. His cult was particularly widespread among the Armenian nobility and the kings of Armenia constituted him as their protector. Also revered were Vahagn, the god of war, consort of Anahit and considered to be Mithra's father; Tir, the god of the moon and stars; and the goddess Astghik. The temples of these gods formed one of [91] the most important cult centers of ancient Armenia on the upper Euphrates. Another cult center, equally rich in shrines, was Aratsani, at Ashtishat, in the Euphrates Valley. A third group of shrines was centered in Bagavan at the foot of Mount Npat. Still another cult center was located on the Upper Tigris.

Greek influence on the ancient Armenian cults began as early as the third century B. C. during the reign of the Seleucids, but under the rule of Tigranes it became particularly intensive. In that period, Armenian religious concepts were overlain with traits of Greek deities, and it was customary to identify Armenian deities with those of Greece: Aramazd with Zeus. Vahagn with Heracles, Mithra/Mher with Apollo, Anahit with Artemis and Cybele, Hane with Athena, and Astghik with Aphrodite.

However, all these deities reflected mainly the religion and culture of the ruling classes permeated by foreign influence. The Armenian rural population continued to practise their ancient cults and rituals. Particularly revered was the cult of the sun god. Ardi-Areg, the cult of the dying and resurrected god, Ara the Handsome, and the ancient deities of rain and fertility. These were the mighty forces of nature upon which depended the welfare of the working population, the crops in the fields and reproduction of cattle. The concepts of these gods were not expressed in statues or temples, and are known only from ancient folk songs and epic tales.

As a result of the long and close political and cultural relations of the Armenian nation with the Persians, Iranian culture left a definite imprint on the emerging Armenian

culture. and particularly on the culture of the Armenian nobility. During the rule of the Seleucids, and especially during the reign of Tigranes II, Greek culture began to play a significant role among the ruling class of Armenia. Representatives of Greek culture at Tigranes' court included Metrodorus from Scepsis, the philosopher, historian and politician, an ardent enemy of the Romans and the author of a lost biography of Tigranes, and Amphicrates, an Athenian sophist and rhetorician. In Tigranocerta and Artashat theatres were built similiar to those of Greek cities, and the works of Greek dramatists were staged by Greek actors. Euripides was particularly popular. Tigranes' son Artavasdes, who inherited the empire from his father, was himself a well-known writer, the author of discourses, historical works and dramas in Greek.

The Hellenization of Armenia was superficial, however, affecting merely the external features of the life of the upper stratum of Armenian society. Greek culture could not leave deep roots in Armenia, since it could not become the heritage of the people.

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## **C. Transcaucasia during the Roman Conquests**

The slaveholding state of Tigranes II, established by conquest, proved to be just as unstable as the allied kingdom of Mithridates Eupator. In Greater Armenia, inner conflicts, in which a considerable role was played by separatist tendencies among the slaveholding nobility, became intensified and weakened the power of the state. Rome's new offensive soon caused the collapse of Tigranes' kingdom, and with Roman dominion began a long period of bitter struggle of the tribes and nationalities of Transcaucasia and Asia Minor against the aggression of Rome.

During the winter of 75-74 B. C., Mithridates again began to war against the Romans and turned to Tigranes with a request for help. Tigranes, however, refused because of disagreements between the two rulers. which at this time grew sharper. Revolts broke out in the Greek cities against Mithridates and he began to lose the support of the Greek slaveholding class at a time when Tigranes had to rely on the Greek and Hellenized strata of the commercial centers of his state. After being defeated by the Romans, Mithridates sought refuge in Armenia. thus providing a pretext for the invasion of that state by the Romans.

[92] Tigranes refused to surrender Mithridates to the Romans, put at his disposal 10,000 horsemen for the recapture of Pontus, and ordered the Armenian generals to invade Roman Cilicia and Lycaonia. However, Lucullus, the Roman leader, anticipated Tigranes. Roman armies invaded Armenia from Asia Minor and advanced to Tigranocerta, where a fierce battle was fought in 69 B. C. The huge but mixed and unwieldy army of Tigranes was defeated by the well-trained and well-armed Roman

troops, and Tigranes himself fled, accompanied by a small detachment of soldiers. In Tigranocerta, which was besieged by the Romans, Greek mercenaries revolted and surrendered the city to the Romans.

The defeat at Tigranocerta and the capture of the capital by the Romans resulted in the secession of many provinces from Tigranes' state, among them Syria, Commagene and Osroene. In the following year (68 B. C.), the Roman army turned north to capture Artashat. Tigranes continued to retreat, luring the Romans deeper into the interior of the country, where the Roman troops suffered from insufficient provisions and ceaseless attacks. A battle took place at the crossing of the Euphrates, where Lucullus encountered the full power of Tigranes' army, which now defended not the great empire but its own homeland. Before reaching Artashat, Lucullus was compelled to return to Mesopotamia, but was soon driven out. Tigranes' kingdom was thus cleared of Roman soldiers.

Pompey, sent in 66 B. C. to replace Lucullus, conducted a successful war against Mithridates in Asia Minor, and simultaneously moved the Parthian King Phraates III to invade Armenia. After crushing Mithridates in Asia Minor, Pompey compelled him to retreat to Colchis, and then advanced toward Armenia.

Learning of the approach of the Roman army and taking into account the danger from the Parthians, with whom an influential part of the Armenian nobility sympathized, Tigranes reached the conclusion that only a compromise could save his position. In 65, when Pompey approached Artashat with his army, Tigranes went to meet him and, removing all insignia of his royal status, bowed in the Oriental manner. Pompey accepted Tigranes' capitulation and left him as the ruler of Armenia and Upper Mesopotamia after he had declared himself "a friend and ally of the Roman people." Sophene was joined to Cappadocia, while Syria and Cilicia became part of the Roman possessions. Tigranes was forced to pay war tribute to Rome; thus ended his great empire. Only the Armenian State remained. and this included only the provinces with an Armenian population.

The submission of Armenia to the supreme sovereignty of Rome brought the former into a difficult situation. The duties of a "friend and ally of the Roman people," which Tigranes was forced to accept, necessitated great material sacrifices which lay heavily upon the conquered people. In addition, from this time on Armenia became the battleground between Rome and Parthia, the struggle against which constituted the principal objective of Roman foreign policy in the East.

Finding itself in this position between Rome and Parthia, the Armenian nobility had to pursue a dual policy. Although closely allied to Parthian noble families by marriage as well as by similar social structure and culture, it was forced, as an ally, to contribute troops to the Romans and to support Roman army units on its territory. This dual role of

Armenia, resulting from its political dependence on Rome, determined its future role as a kind of buffer between the two great states. In 54-53 B. C., when the Romans started a war against Parthia and called upon its allies for help, Tigranes' successor, Artavasdes II, was forced to discontinue his friendly relations with the Parthians. However, after the defeat of the Roman army under Crassus in the battle of Carrhae [modern Haran] in 53 B. C., Artavasdes reestablished friendly relations with the Parthians by giving his sister in marriage to the son of the Parthian king. In the following year, when the Parthians invaded Syria, Artavasdes was their ally. From this time on, Armenia and Parthia remained allies [93] in their common struggle against the Romans. Also joining Parthia at that time were Pharnabazus and Zober, the kings of Iberia and Albania, the king of Osroene and others. The civil war that broke out in Rome contributed to the success of the Parthians. Under Artavasdes II, Armenia gained freedom from Roman rule. The Armenian lands of Sophene, and even Armenia Minor, again became a part of Greater Armenia.

The Romans, however, considered Armenia, Iberia, and Albania as dependent states. When, in the year 36, Mark Antony warred against Parthia and the Roman army advanced from Armenia against Media Atropatene, an ally of Parthia, Artavasdes was forced to take part in the campaign as an ally of Rome. Having met defeat in this war, Mark Antony placed the responsibility for the defeat upon Artavasdes, whom he took prisoner by cunning and whom he later executed in Alexandria. Armenia was again under Roman rule. During the following years, the struggle of the states and nationalities of Transcaucasia for independence flared up again with renewed force. A national revolt, accompanied by ruthless extermination of the Romans, broke out in Armenia.

Augustus refused to cede Armenia to Parthian sovereignty and organized a campaign which resulted in the establishment of a Roman protege as a ruler in Armenia. The Roman party, however, found no support in Armenia. The nobility took an active part in the fight for the throne. The similarity of the social and economic structure and culture of the northeastern and central parts of Armenia with those of Parthia made these provinces, with the city of Artashat, a center for the adherents of Parthia, while in the provinces of southern and southwestern Armenia, particularly Tigranocerta where slavery and a strong Greek influence still prevailed, Roman sympathizers were in power.

All the kings who occupied the throne of Armenia after the demise of the Artashesid dynasty were foreigners, and came to power either with the help of a foreign army or with the consent of the Armenian aristocracy, which played an increasing role in the political life of the country and, in protecting their interests, maneuvered between Rome and Parthia. The continuous struggle for power between Roman and Parthian proteges in Armenia was attended by revolts and bloodshed and, as a consequence, the influence of the royal power gradually declined.

About the middle of the first century A. D., the Armenian throne was occupied, with Roman consent, by representatives of the Iberian royal dynasty, first by the brother of King Pharasmanes Mithridates, an ally of Rome, and then by his son Rhadamistus, who treacherously murdered his uncle. The expulsion of the Iberian Rhadamistus from Armenia as a result of a national revolt and the establishment of the Arsacid Tiridates on the Armenian throne, gave the Romans cause for a large-scale campaign against Armenia. The campaign began in A. D. 56-57. After heavy fighting and a number of defeats, the leadership of the campaign was taken over in the year 58 by Corbulo. He achieved success with the help of allied troops, Iberian and Moschian. Artashat was captured by the Romans and destroyed by fire. Then Corbulo occupied Tigranocerta. Again, a Roman protege was placed in power and a Roman garrison was stationed in Armenia.

A part of the territory along the borders was detached from Armenia and distributed among the rulers of neighboring states: Commagene, Armenia Minor, Iberia and Pontus. The new ruler of Armenia moved against Parthia and invaded Mesopotamia. The result was a counter-attack by the Parthian army, which threatened the Roman possessions in Syria in 61. However, both adversaries realized the difficulties of a new war, and an agreement was reached between Rome and Parthia. Roman troops left Armenia and the Armenians occupied their destroyed capital once more. In 63, a peace treaty was concluded. In the city of Rhandea, in the presence of the [94] Romans and the Armenian-Parthian nobility, Tiridates removed his insignia of royal dignity before a statue of the Emperor Nero, and then proceeded to Rome, where he received them back from the hands of the Emperor in a triumphal ceremony. Artashat, which had been burned by Corbulo, was rebuilt with grants from Nero. Armenia thus became a domain of the Arsacid Dynasty. At the same time, the kings of Armenia pledged themselves as "friends of Caesar and of the Romans." After the establishment of Tiridates on the Armenian throne, there followed a comparatively long period of peace, interrupted only by the forays of northern tribes.

In 114, serious discord arose again between Rome and Parthia over Armenia, and the country once more suffered Roman occupation. This was the famous eastern campaign of the Emperor Trajan, whose intention was to transform Armenia into a Roman province and to change radically the conditions on the eastern border of the empire. In 115 Artashat was occupied by the Roman army and Armenia was declared a Roman province. Then all of Mesopotamia was occupied. However, Trajan did not succeed in consolidating his conquests. In the rear, revolt broke out everywhere and the Emperor soon died on his way to Italy.

Trajan's successor Hadrian (117-38) was forced to return to the former policy in the East. The Roman armies were recalled from Armenia and Mesopotamia and, with



Hadrian's consent, the Armenian throne was occupied by the new representative of the Parthian Arsacid Dynasty, Vologeses I (117-40). The period of peace that ensued, interrupted but briefly by the war of 115-117, was a time of intensive economic and cultural development in Armenia.

The peaceful relations between Rome and Parthia again became disturbed in the middle of the second century, and Transcaucasia was transformed once more into a theatre of lengthy wars. Roman, as well as Parthian, armies invaded Transcaucasia. In the spring of 163, the Romans occupied Armenia after bitter fighting and destroyed Artashat. Rome's new policy of unconditional submission led to a worsening of the already poor conditions of the Armenian people, who were ruthlessly exploited by the aristocracy, impoverished by wars, and forced to provide labor for building fortifications and maintaining the Roman occupation forces. In 162, a national revolt broke out in the country, and the following year Armenia was again occupied by the Romans who once more destroyed Artashat and quelled the insurrection in the year 164. Armenia preserved a nominal dependence, but its capital was moved, on Roman order, to the city of Vardgesavan, which was rebuilt by the Roman army and had its name changed to Kainepolis [Greek "New City"; in Armenian Nor-Kaghak], or Vagharshapat [on the site of modern Echmiadzin]. A strong Roman garrison was stationed in the new capital as indicated by Greek and Latin inscriptions found there.

At the end of the second and beginning of the third century, slaveholding Rome went through a profound crisis which signified the beginning of the end of the great Roman Empire. Its once powerful eastern adversary, the Parthian State, also experienced a period of internal weakness caused by endless dynastic feuds. During the last decade of the second century, Mesopotamia was occupied by Lucius Septimius Severus [Emperor, 193-211] and transformed into a Roman province. His son and successor, Caracalla, exploiting the successes of his father, made an attempt in 215 to transform Armenia also into a Roman province. The Roman army forced Tiridates II, the ruler of Armenia, to flee his country. Nevertheless, Caracalla's attempt ended in failure. Caracalla himself perished in a war against Parthia in 217. His successor, Macrinus, concluded the war with the Parthians in 217 and Tiridates retained the throne of Armenia on the same conditions as before, *i.e.*, as "a friend of Caesar and of Rome."

The situation in Transcaucasia became even more involved when a new, large empire, that of the Sassanids, emerged in Iran (Persia). After its conquest of Parthia, [95] this state turned toward Transcaucasia and assumed the role of Rome's principal competitor in the East. The Sassanids relied upon a broad segment of the Iranian nobility and opposed and fought Hellenism by promoting Iranian culture. They participated eagerly in the revival of Zoroastrianism which had begun under the Arsacids, and its priests, the Magi, became the supporters of the new dynasty.

The struggle of the Transcaucasian states and Rome against Sassanian Iran, with success passing from one side to the other, lasted more than sixty years. At one time, when Rome was in the throes of a civil war, the Sassanid King Shapur I seized Transcaucasia and enthroned there his protege Artavasdes V (258-273), and after the latter's death, ruled the country through his governors. Shapur I's son, Narses (293-302), however, met defeat in his fight against Rome, and Armenia regained its independence. The Armenian throne was once again occupied by one of the Arsacids.

While the period of Tigranes' great empire marked the peak of the flowering of the Armenian slaveholding state, the end of the first century B. C. saw a crisis in the slaveholding structure of Armenia. Continuous strife throughout the country and foreign attacks resulted in a deterioration of productive forces on a large scale, and in a break-down of economic activity which, in turn, led to a greater decentralization of the country.

The ceaseless struggle for the throne and the frequent change of rulers brought about a rapid diminution of the royal estates (*ostans*) which were divided among the numerous members of the royal family and gradually passed into the hands of other aristocratic families. The Armenian nobility considered itself almost independent of royal authority, and sought shelter in inaccessible castles which served as impregnable bastions for the domination of the surrounding country. The establishment of the Arsacid dynasty on the Armenian throne and the treaty of Tiridates with Nero, while bringing peace to the country for some time and strengthening royal power, could not prevent the beginning of the process of economic and political decentralization. According to Pliny, Armenia under Tiridates "was divided into prefectures called *strategies* [*i.e.* military commands]" which also included former independent principalities with "barbaric names." There were 120 such prefectures.

The process of stratification by wealth which was taking place at that time in rural communities, was accelerated by wars which ruined some and made others wealthier. In the majority of cases, the ruined peasants did not abandon their land, but fell irretrievably into a position of dependence on the aristocrats and continued to work for the lord,

differing little from the slaves that had been settled on the land. At the same time, by reason of the development of productive power, slave labor became less and less productive and increasingly unprofitable. The division of the population into *azats* (an Iranian term which earlier designated any free man) and *anazats* ("dependent men"), which had begun earlier, now acquired a new meaning. Under the rule of the Arsacids the designation *anazat* covered not only the rural population but also the lower and middle-class people in towns, including artisans, journeymen and tradesmen, while the *azats* were the aristocrats who gradually developed into feudal lords. Thus feudal relationships came into being.

The outstanding process in Armenian cultural life during the first centuries of our era was the continuing elaboration within the broad popular masses of the distinctive culture of the Armenian nation. The culture of the ruling classes, having been exposed to Iranian and Roman influences, bore the imprints of these influences; however, in mode of life, customs, and religion, the upper stratum of Armenian society was closer to the Parthians. The official religion of the nobility was Zoroastrianism. Also widespread was the cult of Mithra whose priest was King Tiridates I himself.

Remains of the material culture of the time have been little studied. The fortress [96] of Garni excepted, archaeological excavations have not been carried out in any of the ancient towns. Ruins of a classical temple of the second century of our era, already mentioned, were found at Garni. The temple, built of basalt, was on a high platform, the projecting parts of which were ornamented with bas-relief figures supporting the arch of heaven. The rectangular temple building supported a gabled-shaped roof, had a high facade, and was surrounded on all sides by Ionic columns. All details of the temple were richly decorated with varied floral ornaments of exquisite workmanship.

The political development of the other Transcaucasian countries, Iberia, Colchis, and Albania, proceeded under somewhat different circumstances. These countries were not, of course, the battleground of the armed forces of Rome and Parthia. Furthermore, Iberia's and Albania's dependence upon Rome were hardly noticeable by reason of their geographic location.

The Iberian King Artog [Artoces/Artak], who ruled during the first half of the first century B. C., was an ally of Tigranes and Mithridates. The latter was interested in maintaining security behind him in Colchis, which he had conquered, and also in developing trade routes leading through Iberia: the northern route over the mountain passes, and more particularly, the river route along the Rioni and Kura into the countries of Central Asia.

In his winter quarters in Dioscurias, Mithridates, pursued by Pompey, after Mithridates'

retreat from Colchis to the Kingdom of Bosphorus which was under the latter's sovereignty, organized a campaign against the Albanians and Iberians. He defeated the 40,000-man army of the Albanians when they attacked the Roman fortified camps situated on the right bank of the Kura at the Iberian border. Their leader, King Orois, was forced to capitulate.

Thereafter, Pompey invaded Iberia, captured its capital Armazis-Tsikhe, and penetrated deep into the interior of the country. The freedom-loving Iberians, who had never known foreign domination, fought valiantly and stubbornly. Many perished in the unequal fight, while others, according to Dion Cassius, continued partisan warfare. They "scattered into forests where they held out for a few days, fighting with arrows from trees, but when the trees were felled, they too perished." According to Appian, Pompey succeeded in crushing the resistance of these valiant warriors only after the forest was surrounded by the Romans and burned. Pompey agreed to an armistice after receiving precious gifts from the Iberian King Artog, receiving assurance of his submission and taking the King's son as hostage. Thereupon, Pompey led his army to Colchis which he seized without resistance.

It was not so easy, however, to keep the freedom-loving people of Transcaucasia subjugated. Pompey was forced to march once more against the Albanians who revolted to his rear. In the Alazani and Iori valleys he inflicted upon them another crushing defeat.

Pompey, like Mithridates, was interested in the trade route which connected the ports of Colchis with the Transcaspian countries. However, the stubborn resistance of the inhabitants of the Kura lowlands, and the difficult climatic and natural conditions of the country, compelled him to turn back from his campaign of conquest. As a consequence of Pompey's campaigns in Transcaucasia, Iberia and Albania lost their independence for the-first time in their history and, as with Armenia, became "friends and allies of the Romans." Roman power limited the sovereign rights of Iberian and Albanian rulers, and laid a heavy burden on the masses of the people.

For this reason, the Iberians and Albanians were ready to exploit any weakening of Rome's power in Asia in order to free themselves from its shackles. Thus, during the civil war that followed Caesar's death, the Iberians and Albanians refused to acknowledge their dependence on Rome. Anthony Crassus campaigned against King Pharasmanus who ruled Iberia at that time, and after defeating him, turned [97] with his help against Albanian King Zober and forced him into submission. Augustus had again to remind these people of the necessity of observing "friendship and alliance. "

Later, however, its comparatively remote location from the boundaries of the Roman Empire saved Iberia from constant and ruthless interference in its internal life, as was the

case with Armenia. Iberia had to bear only one obligation—to observe Rome's interests in its foreign policy. At the same time, Iberia played an important role in Rome's eastern policy, particularly in its relations with Parthia. Furthermore, the Romans were interested in preserving their control over the northern routes which led over the passes of the Caucasus. In antiquity, people called these passes "gates." Some of these names are preserved to this day, as, for instance, Darial = Dar-i-Alan, which in Persian means "the gate of the Alans." These were actually "gates" through which nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes such as the Scythians, Sarmatians, and Alans irrupted into Transcaucasia. They represented a valuable source of mercenary military power, which was frequently utilized by the states of the Near East.

At the same time, the roads which passed through these gates were of great importance. Strabo, for example, relates that the Aorsi, a Sarmatian tribe that lived on the Tanais [Don] and inhabited a large country in the North Caucasian steppes, traded in Indian and Babylonian goods, obtaining them from the Armenians and Medes. Of all merchandise, slaves were the most important for Rome. At that time Sarmatia represented the richest source of slaves from among prisoners of war. The city of Tanais at the Don estuary was one of the largest slave markets of the ancient world.

The Darial and Rok passes in Iberia and the Mamison and Klukhor passes in Colchis were located on Georgian territory. Of particular importance was the Darial Pass which, for this reason, was kept well protected. The protection of these passes was entrusted by the Romans to the Iberians.

During their wars against the Parthians, the Romans frequently made use of the services of the Iberian kings. In the thirties of the first century of our era, when Roman-Parthian relations again became strained, Pharasmanes I the Courageous ruled in Iberia. Under him Iberia attained a high level of economic development and great power.

Like Pharasmanes, his immediate successors conducted an energetic foreign policy, always in accord with their alliance with Rome. Helping the Romans in their wars against the Parthians for the domination of Armenia, Pharasmanes even succeeded in seizing Armenia and establishing, with Roman assistance, the accession of his brother Mithridates to the throne of Armenia. Mithridates was later perfidiously slain by Pharasmanes' son Rhadamistus, as related earlier. As a result of military interference by the Parthian King Vologeses and an insurrection in Armenia, Rhadamistus' rule came to an early end. For the assistance rendered to Corbulo in his campaign against Armenia, Pharasmanes received territorial concessions at the expense of Armenian border provinces.

In the first century A.D., Iberia was a strong, consolidated, slaveholding state. Protected

as an ally of Rome against Parthia, its safety was a guarantee of Rome's interests and of the preservation of peace in the Near East. It is probably for this reason that Vespasian ordered, in A. D. 75, the erection of a strong wall across the Kura Valley southeast of the capital of Armazis-Tsikhe. The building of this wall is reported in a Greek inscription which was found on the new bank of the Kura River near the ZAGES [hydroelectric station].

Toward the end of the first and during the second century of our era, the Iberian State continued to develop and to become stronger. In Trajan's great campaign against Parthia (114-117), the Roman army included Iberian contingents. The extent [98] of Rome's appreciation of Iberian help is indicated by the fact that a tomb was erected in Rome to commemorate the heroism of the Iberian King's son Amazasp, who perished in Trajan's campaign.

King Pharasmanes II, who ruled in the second century, pursued an aggressive policy in relation to neighboring states. In order to frighten and weaken Armenia and Parthia, Pharasmanes organized an invasion on a large scale by the Alans through the territory of Albania, ravaging this country and adjacent Media Atropatene and threatening even the Roman possessions in Cappadocia. Evidently in connection with these events, Hadrian invited Pharasmanes to come to Rome, but the latter haughtily refused. Nevertheless, the visit of the Iberian King to Rome actually took place. Roman historians report that he and his family, together with a pompous retinue, were the guests of Hadrian. The Iberian King, his son and other noblemen, clad in heavy armor, displayed their military skills before the Emperor and his court. Hadrian was so impressed that he ordered a statue of the Iberian King on horseback installed on the Campus Martius, presented to Pharasmanes new lands as gifts, gave him a detachment of 500 soldiers and a battle elephant, and returned him to his country with great honors.

It appears from a bilingual Greek-Aramaic inscription found on a grave near Mtskheta that Pharasmanes II's successor was King Xepharnougos, who continued to conduct successful wars.

Iberia also preserved its independence during the period of the Roman-Sassanian wars, which completely ravaged Armenia but affected very little the territory of ancient Georgia. Although, according to a treaty concluded in 298 in Nisibis [modern Nisibin or Nusaybin] between Rome and Persia, the Iberian kings were supposed to receive at their ascendance to the throne the insignia of royal power from the Roman emperor, actually the latter had no power over this protectorate.

Archaeological evidence and ancient inscriptions from excavations near Mtskheta furnish a wealth of data concerning the mode of life and culture of the higher strata of the

Iberian aristocracy and of the citizens of Mtskheta, as well as urban construction during the first and third centuries A.D.

Very intensive construction operations took place in Armazis-Tsikhe during the first and second centuries. Excavations indicate at this time large scale restoration projects with crumbling or destroyed walls of fortifications rebuilt with materials from more ancient walls. To this period also belongs the construction of a water supply line equipped with pottery pipes, which provided the capital with pure, cool water from mountain springs. In addition to being restored, the fortified area was expanded.

The burials of this period in the Samthavro cemetery differ markedly from the earlier burials in clay vessels with simple, uniform furnishings. The use of roofing tile for sepulchers became general; then baked brick and, finally, stone slabs were used for this purpose. The mode of burial also changed. The dead were no longer buried in a flexed position, as had been the case in "jug" and other burials of the same time, but were extended. Burials of the poor and of the wealthy are clearly differentiated. Articles of gold appear in the graves: earrings, rings, bracelets, forehead bands of thin leaf gold, neck ornaments of gold wire, buttons, pendants and other decorations as well as silver and bronze vessels. Next to pottery vessels finished on the potter's wheel, and imitating the shape of classical vessels, glass vessels were found of graceful and varied form and color. Adjacent to the graves of the wealthy, containing many precious objects, we find the graves of the poor entirely devoid of accompaniments. In the graves of the first to third centuries in Samthavro, we find coins—Roman denarii and Parthian drachmae—more frequently than in the "jug" burials. The graves of the first and second centuries represented a new social structure—a developed class society.

[99] The excavations at Armazis-Khevi have yielded burials of the Iberian nobility. Large stone coffins made of massive slabs or cut in rock, yielded, together with the remains of the dead, artistic objects made by local artisans, such as fine gold ornaments, belt parts, bracelets, necklaces, rings, earrings, clasps, daggers decorated with precious stones, silver vessels, cut stones, gems and cameos, some with portraits, and also many imported articles from the workshops of Asia Minor and Alexandria. Large quantities of money were placed in the graves, mainly Roman imperial gold coins, from the end of the first to the third century. Wealthy burials of the nobility have been found at Bagineti, at Mtskheta, and in other nearby localities. History has benefited particularly from inscriptions on stone slabs, silver vessels and gems found in the excavations of Armazi. An Aramaic inscription from the time of Mithridates, son of Pharasmanes I, and a Greek-Aramaic inscription on a grave, furnish valuable information concerning political history and state organization. Inscriptions on precious articles give the names of kings and functionaries not known from other sources.

During the first to third centuries, social structure in Iberia developed, in general, along lines similar to those in Armenia, regardless of differences in outside political events. Differentiation according to wealth also took place in rural communities, where part of the peasantry became richer through participation in successful wars, thereby acquiring slaves and booty, while others were impoverished through being separated from their farms. Captured prisoners were supported by families, who used them for field work. At the same time, the bankrupt peasants fell into dependence upon wealthy individuals, worked on their lands and, being in debt, had to deliver part of the yield of their own property. Thus, the mass of the Iberian population that previously composed the "people's army" (*eri*) became increasingly differentiated into "nobility" and the "common people", between whom grew irreconcilable conflicts.

The major portion of the wealth derived from exploitation of peasants and slaves as well as from war booty went to the higher military slave-owning nobility connected by its origin with the former clan aristocracy. This higher nobility served in administrative capacities, filling the posts of governors, higher state officials and military commanders. The economic support for the aristocracy was provided by its large estates. These estates, worked by slaves and indentured peasants, yielded huge incomes. Numerous servants were employed at the courts of the landlords. However, these estates participated but little in trade.

The centers of trade and crafts were the cities. The most important among them was the ancient city of Mtskheta, whose acropolis, the fortress of Armazis-Tsikhe, was the capital of the kingdom. In the environs of Mtskheta, many larger settlements of artisans and traders existed, including the city of Sevsamori. The approaches to the capital up the Kura Valley were protected by a number of strong fortresses. As before, foreign traders, mainly Syrians and Jews, played a major role in commerce. They established their own communities and lived in the cities in separate sections.

State power was completely in the hands of the king. From the Greco-Aramaic grave inscription of Serapita we know of the existence of the high function of viceroy (*epitropos*), who headed the royal court and was also the commander-in-chief of the army. The existence of the position of chief artist and architect is indicated by a funerary inscription of the fourth century from the Samthavro burial ground. There is reason, however, to assume that this function also existed in earlier times.

Like Armenia, Iberia was divided into a number of administrative districts headed by army chiefs or *strategoï*. Some of them were hereditary governors in their provinces, while others received their positions from the king as a reward for services. They combined the functions of civil and military authority, and had under them officials for the collection of taxes. It is apparent from inscriptions on stone slabs of the first and



second centuries, as well as from the silver goblet from Bori and on [100] various valuable objects from wealthy burials in Armazis-Khevi, that the Iranian term *pitiakhsh* was used to refer to the function of a provincial administrator in this period.

The core of the Iberian army were footmen armed with long swords and spears. The lancers and archers were famous, and there were also cavalymen who fought with heavy weapons. The foot soldiers were recruited from among peasants, the cavalry from the nobility. Auxiliary contingents were composed chiefly of allied Albanians and mercenary units of Sarmatians and Alans.

During the first to third centuries, crafts reached a very high level of development. Skillful masonry and engineering are evident above all in the fortifications and remains of buildings at Armazis-Tsikhe (ruins of similar walls made of adobe bricks on stone foundations have been unearthed at Gori and Tsitsamuri), in the remains of the palace buildings at Armazis-Khevi, with their fine architectural details in Roman style, fragments of marble statues, and baths. Interesting evidence of Iberian engineering skill in the first century are to be seen in the vaults discovered near Mtskheta. One of these was a rectangular chamber made of sandstone slabs, set without mortar, with an entrance in the eastern wall. Under the tile-covered, gabled roof is a semicircular arch. This vault has analogies in classical architecture as found in Greece, Asia Minor and on the northern Black Sea coast, and belongs to the transition period from the first to the second century. The other vault of the second century, situated on the lower terrace of the northwestern part of the fortified town of Bagineti, had a corbeled arch. Its walls were built from cut stone blocks and reinforced with iron clamps sealed with lead.

Metallurgical arts were likewise highly developed. The site of Sarkineti, near the Dzegvi railroad station (the old fortress at Sarkineti is mentioned in Kartli's Annals, referenced to the end of the fourth century B. C.), has yielded evidence of iron works with remains of smelting furnaces and a large quantity of iron implements and weapons. Sarkineti [Georgian *rkina* means "iron"] was evidently the principal center of iron metallurgy in ancient Iberia. Simultaneously with iron working, bronze casting continued to develop and furnished the material for household utensils and ornaments.

Pottery furnished building materials: bricks, roofing tile, and water pipes. Clay vessels of that period were frequently given classical shapes. Jewelry making and weaving were highly developed.

Written documents are known only from the time of Mithridates, the son of Pharasmanes I, who lived during the second half of the first century A. D. At that time Greek was the official language in international relations. Greek inscriptions are found also on portraits on gems, and on certain vessels. However, we may assume that, as in Armenia, literacy

existed in Iberia before the Greek language was introduced. The so-called "Armazian" writing, based on the Aramaic writing system adapted to the local language, evidently developed in Iberia in about the third or second centuries B. C.

As was the case with "Armazian" writing, related to the Parthian and Pehlevi script, many names of the Iberian nobility, such as Pharasmanus, Pharasmanes, Amazaspes, Mithridates, Xepharnougos and others, suggest considerable influence of Iranian culture on Iberia's ruling class. At the same time, the close relations with Rome facilitated a strong influence of Greek and Roman culture on Iberian culture, especially on that of the Iberian aristocracy and wealthy classes of the city population. This trend found its expression in the architectural characteristics of dwellings and tombs in Greco-Roman style, and the use of imported utensils and ornaments, costumes and hairdos in latest Roman fashion, and Roman names, such as Publicius Agrippa. The addition of names of Roman emperors to the names of some Iberian kings and high dignitaries (King Flavius Dades; Aurelius Acholis, chief artist and architect) indicates close political ties with Rome and the right of persons bearing such names to Roman citizenship.

[101] The disintegration of the slaveholding structure in Iberia began later than in Armenia. This is to be explained primarily by the later development of slaveholding structure of a slaveholding state in Iberia as compared with Armenia, by reason of its remoteness from the slave states of the Hellenistic East. At the same time, poorly developed commercial relations retarded the evolution of social relations. The distinctive nature of the political history of ancient Iberia, which was free from the continuous ruthless foreign interventions and painful experiences that characterized the ancient history and fate of the Armenian nation, promoted the stability of royal power and prevented the development of political division. The peak of slaveholding society in Iberia is to be dated in the first and second centuries. The beginning of the disintegration of the slaveholding structure and the emergence of feudalism consequent upon the fusion of rural slaves and indentured peasants into a single social class serving a feudalized nobility, occurred no earlier than the third century A. D.

The conquest of Colchis by Mithridates Eupator at the end of the second century B. C. did not encounter any particular resistance from the local population. The country, divided into small principalities and ruled by kings lacking political and military power, was not in a position to resist the superior power of the Pontic army. Colchis was transformed into an administrative district of the Pontic Empire and governed by one of the higher dignitaries of the so-called "friends" of the king. The mountainous districts of the western Caucasus, inhabited by the Svans and numerous other tribes, and the coast between Dioscurias and Sindica, inhabited by the Zygians, Heniochians, and Achaeians, preserved their independence and the rule of their tribal leaders.

The new satrapy was of great importance to Mithridates as the main supply base for his fleet. Timber for construction was floated from the mountainous regions down the rivers of Colchis, and the agricultural districts supplied linen cloth, wax, and hemp for ropes. Sailors were recruited from the population. In 83 B. C., Colchis made an unsuccessful attempt to gain independence under the leadership of Mithridates' son of the same name.

The trading population of the Greek cities of Phasis and Dioscurias, on the other hand, wanted Colchis to remain part of a strong and organized state in order to guarantee orderly trade with other Black Sea ports under the protection of the Pontic fleet. The newly revived trade relations on river routes promoted an intensified trade with the interior provinces of the Caucasus.

After Mithridates' defeat on the Bosphorus in 63 B. C., Pompey began to organize the conquered provinces, made Colchis an independent state, and appointed Aristarchus as its ruler. Coins have been found with inscriptions marking Aristarchus' twelfth anniversary as ruler of Colchis in 51 B. C.

Mithridates' son Pharnacis who, after his father's death, ruled on the Bosphorus with the permission of the Romans, made an attempt to shake off Rome's protectorate and regain all of his father's possessions in Colchis and in Asia Minor. Taking advantage of the civil war between Pompey and Julius Caesar, he recaptured without difficulty all of Colchis up to the boundaries of Iberia. Pharnacis pillaged the peaceful country, including the famous Leucoteia sanctuary in the Moschian Mountains. Then, suffering defeat by Caesar's armies in Asia Minor in 47 B. C., he fled to the Bosphorus where he perished. Soon the country was again ravaged by Mithridates of Pergamum who, on Julius Caesar's order, went to the Bosphorus to take the royal throne.

The triumvir Mark Antony bestowed part of the provinces in the southeastern Black Sea region, together with the title of king, upon Polemon, the son of the rhetorician Zeno, a famous citizen of Laodicea. Polemon united under his rule Colchis and the countries in the southeastern Black Sea region as far as the city of Pharnacia in the west and Armenia Minor. The political center of his kingdom was Trapezus. This state, known under the name of "Pontus Polemoniacus," was ruled [102] after Polemon's death by his wife Pythodoris. We can suppose that with the establishment of Polemonid rule in the southeastern Black Sea region. the stormy times of Mithridates and his successors gave way to a period of relative peace. After the conclusion of a peace with Parthia, Pontus Polemoniacus was transformed in A. D. 63 into a Roman province. Roman garrisons were established in all important cities of the Caucasian Black Sea coast. This brought the local population into a difficult situation. The forced labor connected with the construction of roads and fortresses, the arbitrary behavior of the Roman soldiery, the exploitation of usurers and merchants. the increasing social conflicts and, finally, the struggle of the freedom-loving mountain tribes for independence, caused a national movement on a broad scale, embracing all of the eastern Black Sea coast and Colchis. In the year A. D. 69. an insurrection led by Anicetus, a freedman of King Polemon and former chief of the fleet, broke out in Trapezus. Anicetus, having attracted to his side the poor urban population, the slaves, and the nearby mountain tribes, seized and pillaged Trapezus, crushed the garrison and burned the Roman warships. The rebels built small boats and lived by piracy on sea and land. The revolt was suppressed by a military detachment sent by Vespasian which captured Anicetus, who had taken refuge with one of the local chiefs at the mouth of the Khob River north of Phasis.

At the beginning of the second century of our era. Colchis became a part of the Roman province of Cappadocia. Arrian [Flavius Arrianus] ruled this province as Roman governor from 131 to 137. In 134 he undertook a sea voyage along the coast of the province which was entrusted to him and inspected the Roman fortifications and garrisons. The report of this inspection trip, submitted to Hadrian, constitutes a valuable source of geographic, ethnographic and military and political information. Strong fortifications were built and Roman garrisons were stationed at all points on the seashore

suitable as anchorage for vessels. Thus, in Apsara, a fortress south of the Chorokh estuary, the garrison consisted of five cohorts. The town of Phasis was a strong fortress with walls and towers built of baked brick, surrounded by a double moat and provided with war machines for defense against attacks by local tribes. The population of the town consisted of Roman army veterans, tradespeople and artisans. The town of Dioscurias, which at that time changed its name to Sebastopolis, was the farthest point of Roman rule. A Latin inscription found there indicates that Arrian visited this fortress.

The first and second centuries were a period of disintegration of the slaveholding society and economy of Colchis. The short-lived political unity of the southeastern Black Sea region, created by foreign conquerors [Pontic Empire, Pontus Polemoniacus], had completely gone at that time. The country was divided into small tribal principalities, whose hereditary rulers, minor princes, depended upon Roman power; their authority had to be confirmed by the Roman emperor. There was no Roman provincial administration in Colchis; nevertheless, the population of the coastal towns suffered from Roman oppression. Economic and cultural ties with the outside world were weak. The ancient cities had lost their former importance and were under constant threat of attack by local tribes whose leaders north of Dioscurias and east of Trapezus recognized only a nominal dependence on Rome, which consisted in the obligation of paying tribute. Pityus, a large and wealthy city, was looted by the Heniochians, evidently during the first half of the first century. Dioscurias according to Pliny, presented a picture of desolation.

The changes in the social and political structure of Colchis which are clearly apparent during the second half of the first and first half of the second century, were closely connected with a large-scale migration of tribes which had begun during the first half of the first century, and which brought about substantial changes in the ethnic makeup of the southeastern Black Sea region and of the western Caucasus. Thus, instead of the Colchidians, who inhabited the Rioni Valley and the area around [103] the city of Phasis at the turn of our era, Pliny, about A. D. 70, mentioned the Lazi as living in this area; evidently they had assimilated the Colchidians. The name of the Colchidians was preserved only east of Trapezus. The Heniochians who lived near Dioscurias appeared, according to Pliny, displaced to an area near the Chorokh estuary. Pliny mentions the "province of Cegritica" (*i.e.*, "the province of the Egri") for the first time. Ptolemy calls it "Ecrectica." These names are encountered even in the present-day vernacular designation of the Megreli-Egrisi. All these facts indicate considerable ethnic displacements during the first century. Major importance was assured now to formerly backward tribes, who continued to play roles of major importance in early medieval history such as, for example, the Lazi, responsible for the Kingdom of Lazica or Egrisi in the fourth century, and the Abasgians and Apsilians, the direct forebears of the modern Abkhazians.

As far as the archaeology of Colchis is concerned, considerable material was found in

burial grounds containing the graves of the higher nobility, with rich furnishings, and a small number of graves of the common people. Graves of the nobility, with magnificent inventories, have been found near the settlements of Tageloni, Bori, Kldeeti, Ureki, and in many other places in western Georgia. During the first centuries of our era, so-called "jug" burials characteristic of the preceding period in the history of Colchis are rarely encountered.

Archaeological evidence from western Georgia indicates a high development of handicrafts and trade. Together with imported articles, particularly products of classical craft centers, many objects made by local master craftsmen are found and reveal not only highly developed techniques of jewelry manufacture but also a distinctive local art style. We find, for example, cups of local manufacture, such as the one found at Bori, on which was engraved a ritual scene of a horse standing in front of an altar. The vessels in the graves of the nobility were predominantly of silver; most of them had been imported from Asia Minor and from other craft centers of the Roman Empire. There were silver buckets with handles representing the heads of animals, pitchers, goblets, cups, spoons, etc. Imported bronze jugs for wine (*oenochoe*) were also found.

Silver coins were in circulation—Roman imperial denarii, drachmae, didrachmae, and coins of Caesarea in Cappadocia, as well as local gold coins, the so-called "barbarian imitations" of the staters of Alexander.

As to the religion of the mass of the people, we note the persistence of the ancient rural worship of heavenly bodies and fertility cults. These cults also include the worship of the animals in whose form celestial bodies were conceived. The deity of sunlight was represented by numerous representations of deer and horses. Such symbols, including a gold deer's head, have been found in a grave near Tageloni, and on silver cups of local manufacture in graves at Bori and Armazi where we find representation of a horse standing in front of a sacrificial table or altar. Similar representations occur among the numerous and varied bronze animal figurines from graves of the first to third centuries of our era in western Georgia.

During the last centuries B.C., the Iranian cult of Mithra, the deity of light and sun, whose image was identical with that of the ancient deity represented as a horse among Caucasian tribes, was widespread among the ruling classes. The horse was the animal offered as a sacrifice on Mithra's altar. The portraits of rulers, represented with luminous auras as embodiments of the solar deity on earth, are related to a tradition developed by Greek and Hellenistic art of representing the solar deity Helios as a youth with a nimbus of solar rays.

Fertility cults were obviously of considerable importance in Colchis at this time. The

female cult was connected with the worship of the ancient Colchidian deity, the so-called Phasian goddess, whose cult was introduced by the Greek colonists who founded the city of Phasis. It was there that the statue and principal sanctuary of [104] this goddess were located. Her profile and those of the animals consecrated to her—the bull and the lion—were stamped on Colchidian coins. During the Hellenistic period, her image merged with that of the Mother Goddess of Asia Minor, Cybele or Rhea. As such, she was represented on the coins of Aristarchus, and was described by Arrian. Another fertility goddess appears to have been worshiped in a sanctuary located in the province of the Moschians on the eastern border of Colchis, which Strabo called Leucateia.

Consequent upon the general weakening of the Roman Empire, Roman rule in Colchis during the third century became purely nominal and consisted merely in a formal confirmation of actually independent local rulers. At that time, the most powerful among the tribal principalities in Colchis was that of the Lazi or Zani [Chani]. The center of the area inhabited by them was the Rioni Plain which is called, in Georgian sources, Mukhurisi, or Samokalako ["the province of towns"]. Among the towns of the Rioni Valley, Rhodopolis [Georgian Vardtsikhe] and the ancient Phasis were the most prosperous.

In the fourth century, the ruler of the Lazi expanded considerably his territory by compelling the chiefs of the Apsilians, Abasgians and other small tribes to acknowledge his sovereignty. He created a state which united the lands of western Georgia on a basis of local autonomy. This was the so-called Kingdom of the Lazi [Lazica or Egrisi]. Upon enthronement, the king of the Lazi continued to receive the insignia of his royal power from the Roman emperors and bound himself to protect the mountain passes against invasions by the warlike groups living north of the Caucasus.

Very little is known about the history of Albania during the first centuries of our era. After Pompey's campaign, Albania actually preserved its independence. In his campaign against Iberia and Albania in 36 B. C., Crassus compelled King Zober, who ruled Albania in that period, to declare himself an "ally" of Rome. Evidently, at that time, Albania also became dependent upon neighboring Iberia. When, in 20 B. C., Augustus organized a campaign against Armenia under the leadership of Tiberius Claudius Nero, Albania's relations of "friendship and alliance" with Rome were again strengthened, and this dependence on Rome continued until the first half of the first century A. D. In any event, in A. D. 35, the Albanians, together with the Iberians, participated on the side of the Romans in the war against the Parthians in Armenia. According to Tacitus, "Pharasmanes allied himself with the Albanians and procured aid from the Sarmatians." Albania's dependence on Rome and Iberia ceased only after the establishment of the Parthian Dynasty of the Arsacids in Armenia. After that, Albania's kings leaned toward Parthia instead of toward Rome, and the Romans never actually achieved their

permanent submission.

The peaceful Albanian peasants and townsmen suffered much under the frequent raids of the Alans, which did not cease until the fourth century A. D. The Parthian king Vologeses requested Vespasian to help him with troops against the Alans and to send him one of his sons to act as commander of this detachment. Domitian then agreed to lead the campaign against the Alans, but for some reason this plan did not materialize.

Seventy km. south of Baku, on Beiuk-Dash Mountain, a Latin inscription of Domitian's time has recently been found. It is cut into rock, which contains the name of a certain Lucius Julius Maximus, centurion of the Twelfth Legion "Fulminata." This easternmost Latin inscription gives evidence of Domitian's attempt to re-establish a Roman protectorate over Albania and to protect Media and Armenia from the ever-present threat of invasion.

During Trajan's eastern campaign, Albania was again forced to acknowledge its dependence on Rome, and to agree that the enthronement and legitimacy of the Albanian king be confirmed by the Roman emperor. However, in the second half of the second century Albania regained her freedom from Rome.

[105] The material culture of Azerbaijan [formerly Albania] during the first to third centuries of our era has been insufficiently studied. The sites of this period known to us consist almost exclusively of burial grounds. Burial in clay vessels, so-called "jug" burial, which appeared in the second century B. C., became widespread. This mode of burial may be plotted at present over the entire territory of the Kura-Araxes region, in the Mughan and Milsk steppes as far as the foothills of the Caucasus Range. The "jug" cemetery at Mingechaur is particularly extensive. A study of these burials has shown that this mode of burial was still practised in Mingechaur during the first century of our era, and even some time later. It has been found also that later burials differ from earlier ones in that large jars with food and drink, usually placed around the burial vessels in the grave, are absent. Leg bracelets disappear. In early "jug" burials, bracelets are usually made of bronze; in the burials of the first century of our era, they are of silver.

In addition to clay vessels and articles of adornment, weapons were a part of the inventory of "jug" burials in the first century A.D. In the middle of the first century, in the environs of Mingechaur on the left bank of the Kura River, we find a new form of burial in a rectangular cribwork of timbers with timber roofing, in which the skeleton was laid on the side in a flexed position. Judging by the Roman coins found in them, burials of this kind were widespread from the middle of the first and through the third century of our era, inclusively, extending perhaps even into the fourth century. Burials of the second to fourth centuries on the right bank of the Kura are represented in Mingechaur by



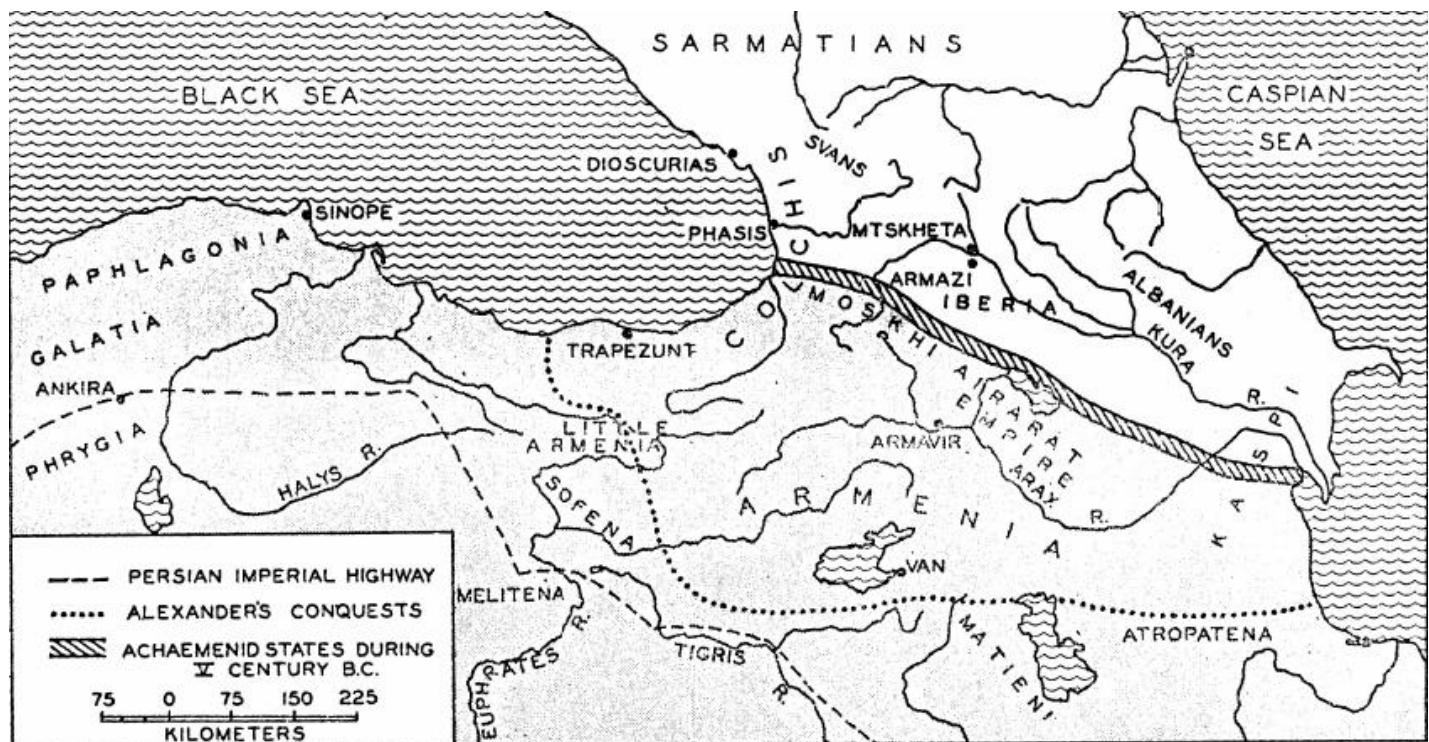
burials of skeletons in extended position; either with no accompaniments, or a poor inventory consisting of bronze or iron belt buckles and fibulae and small iron knives.

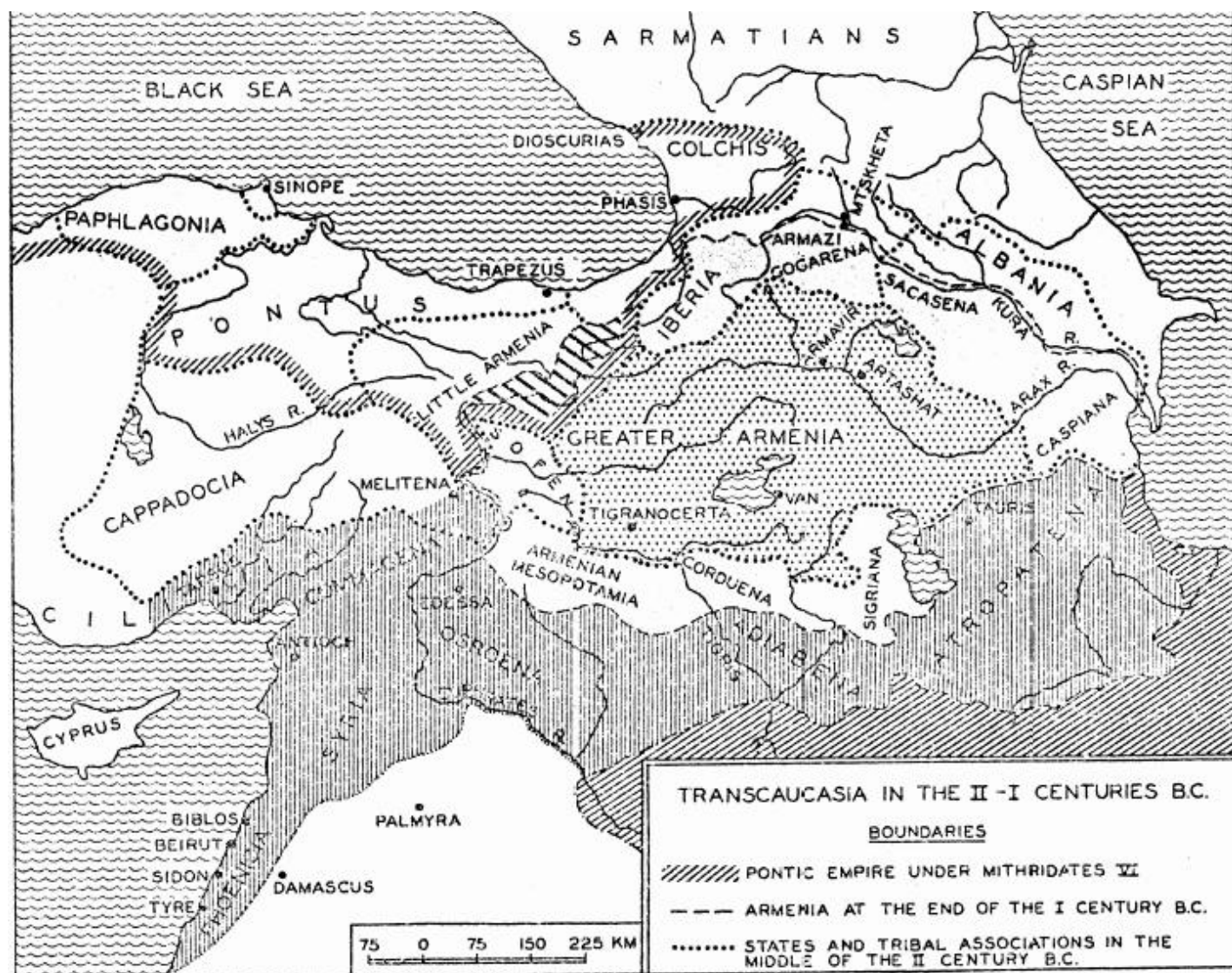
The scanty archaeological material which we have described, together with the information given by early writers and by finds of coins, make it possible to reach some conclusions regarding the development of Albania [modern Azerbaijan] during the first centuries of our era.

At the beginning of the first century, a long process of ethnic fusion and the consolidation of the Albanian nation had been completed. A slaveholding structure developed in Albania later and to a lesser extent than in Armenia and Georgia. This helps to explain the considerably later growth of the Albanian State as compared with state development in Armenia and Georgia. The capital of Albania was, according to Pliny, the city of Kabalaka on the left bank of the Kura, in the present Kutkashensk Raion near Nidzh-Kabalaka. This town, which served as the main residence of the Albanian king, was a strong fortress with stone walls, protected on two sides by mountain torrents with steep banks, and on the third side by a deep moat which could be filled with water from the river. At the same time, primitive communal structure was still retained in some areas of Albania, particularly those inhabited by nomads and in mountain areas remote from trade routes.

During the first and second centuries, the slaveholding structure developed further and inequalities of wealth became more pronounced. As agriculture progressed and large landholdings grew among the Albanian nobility, particularly in progressive rural districts, trade and crafts flourished. Money began to circulate in Albania from the third or second centuries B. C. and came into use at first in southern areas on the right bank of the Kura (Seleucid and early Arsacid coins). It spread slowly northward to the left bank of the Kura, where coins have been found that belong to a period no earlier than the first century B. C. The development of crafts and the marked intensification of trade during the first centuries of our era is indicated also by the names of about thirty towns and larger settlements in ancient Albania reported by Ptolemy. However, their location in the present state of archaeological knowledge presents great difficulties.

[106] In the third century, Albania, together with Media Atropatene, became a part of the Sassanian Empire, and the Albanian city of Paitakaran became the residence of a Sassanian military governor.





CONQUESTS OF  
TIGRANES II IN  
THE 70'S B.C.

ARMENIA'S ANNEXATIONS  
ACCORDING TO TREATY  
WITH POMPEY

ARMENIA AT THE  
END OF THE  
I CENTURY B.C.

PARTHIAN EMPIRE  
DURING THE  
I CENTURY B.C.

